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See story on page 43

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"I came up with the thought of trying to create suburban office space in West Hartford Center." – *Seymour Sard*

See story page 16

ON THE COVER

The start of the school year was an exciting time for Charter Oak students, who returned to a brand new building in which to learn.

Photo by Abigail Albair
See story on page 43

Correction
In last month's "Parenting help" story, the names of Matt Connell's wife and daughter names were swapped in the photo caption; his wife is Ayelet and his daughter is Jordana.

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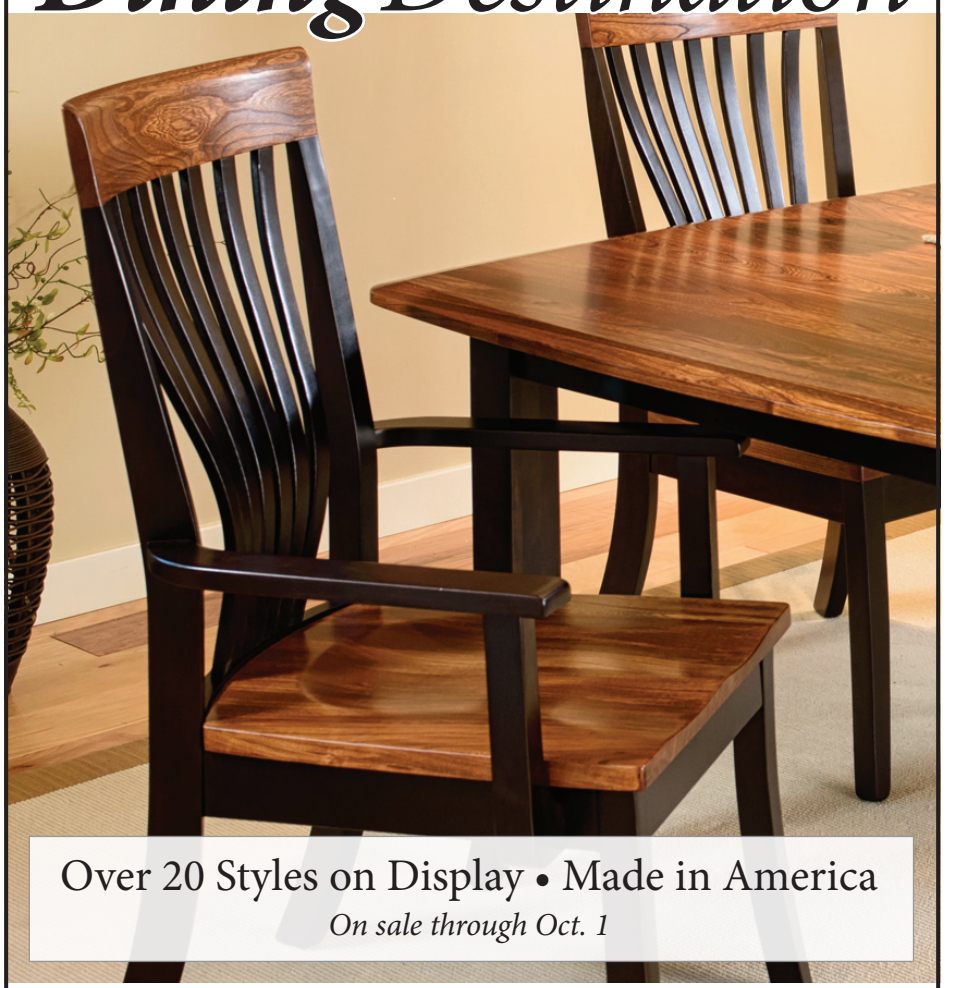

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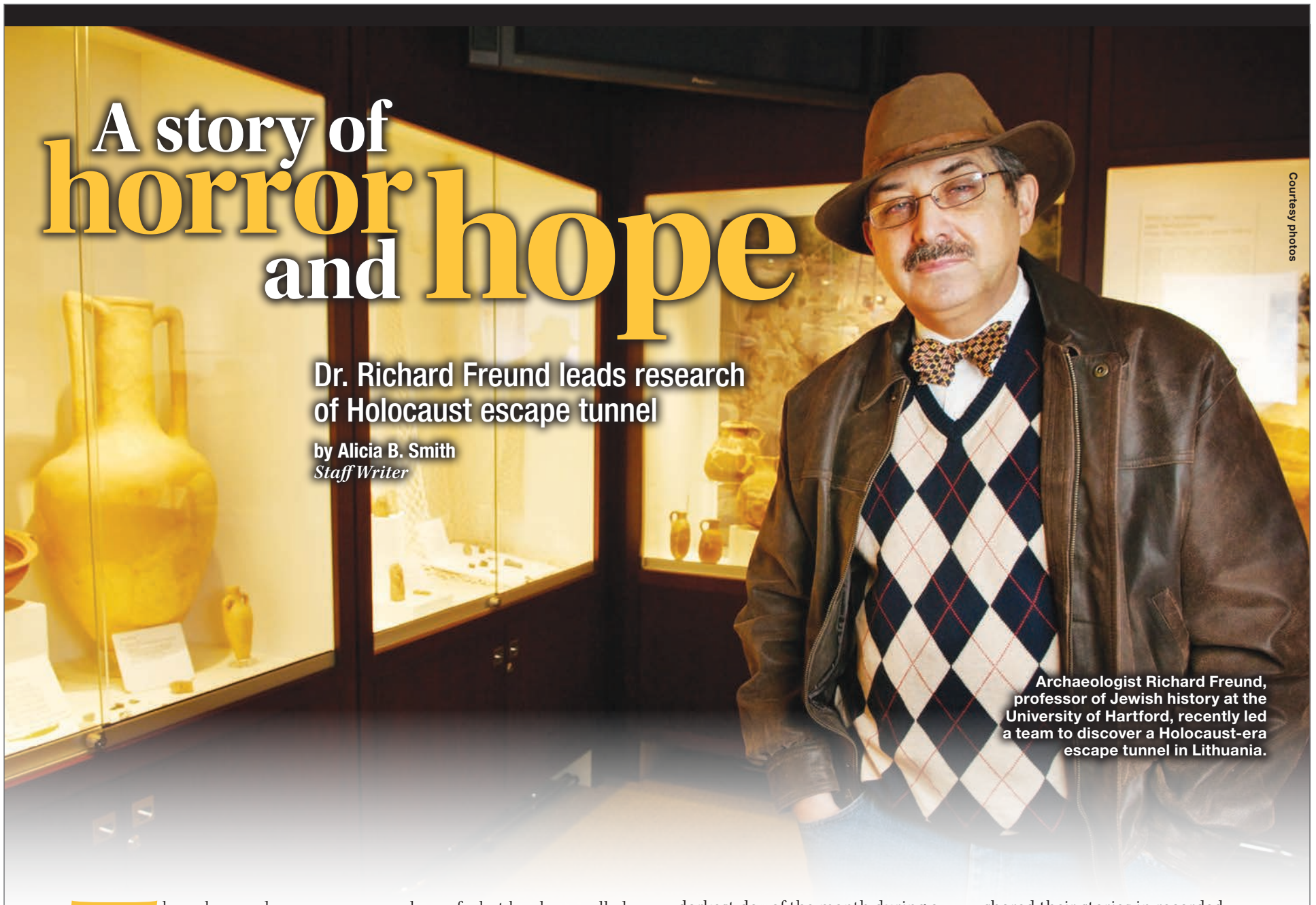
A story of horror and hope

Dr. Richard Freund leads research of Holocaust escape tunnel

by Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writer



Courtesy photos

Archaeologist Richard Freund, professor of Jewish history at the University of Hartford, recently led a team to discover a Holocaust-era escape tunnel in Lithuania.

The only sounds were the singing of the birds and a distant train.

"Every 20 to 30 minutes you hear a train passing by," said Dr. Richard Freund, a professor at the University of Hartford. "All you hear are the birds and trains."

As one of his students observed, these sounds would have also been heard by thousands of Jewish victims who were killed here and are now buried in massive pits.

Freund and his team were working amid the extermination pits at Paneriai, Lithuania, where several burial sites contain the remains of 100,000 people executed there by the Nazis during World War II.

Freund and his group had been invited to Lithuania to find the exact location of a tunnel that had been created by a group of 80 Jews, members of what has been called the burning brigade, whose job it was to exhume those executed and burn the evidence before reburying the bodies in large pits. This gruesome work was made worse knowing that in all likelihood they would meet the same fate as those they were burying.

In a daring effort to survive, under the cover of nightfall and over a period of several months, using their hands and rudimentary tools, the group dug an escape tunnel. On April 15, 1944 - the last night of Passover, the holiday of liberation - the group escaped by crawling through the tunnel.

"Not that I think they were trying to be symbolic, they had other things on their mind," Freund said, adding that April 15 would have been the darkest day of the month during a time of year when the temperature would be more temperate and it was within a day or two of Easter, when it is likely that some of the guards may not have been feeling well after celebrating the holiday.

By the time the group had crawled to the tunnel's end guards had been alerted to what was happening. Only 11 of these individuals survived.

Following the end of the war, thousands of survivors, including those who had used this tunnel, shared their stories in recorded testimonies, which told the world that such a tunnel existed. Until this spring, no evidence had been found confirming their accounts.

In 2004, the tunnel entrance was found, but it was not clear if the tunnel itself existed after so much time had passed.

Freund was asked, along with other geophysicists and scientists, to visit the site to see if they could locate the tunnel, its exact path and the exit site.

The archeologist is part of

Courtesy photos

A plaque marks the burial pits containing the remains of 100,000 people murdered by the Nazi's in Lithuania.

a team with members from the U.S. and Canada that work together traveling all over the world using specialized equipment to "unearth" sites.

"[We] can go to any place in the world with our equipment and entirely map what is below the surface before anyone puts a spade in the earth," Freund said.

The group uses ground-penetrating radar as well as electrical resistivity tomography; both help show what is below the surface.

"Archeology is a very destructive science. It's the only science where you can never repeat the experiment. Once you move the earth you can never replace the site to the way it was," he said.

Using infrared technology, the equipment, which is borrowed from the gas and oil industries, is able to "see" below the earth's surface without the scientists having to dig through the earth themselves and possibly destroying or disrupting useful evidence from the past.

"Its like an MRI for the ground," Freund said. "It identifies material below the surface."

The technology can also detect metal fragments, another indicator that the group was on to something. As Freund explained, the escapees would have had metal shackles on and would have removed them in the tunnel to avoid detection and scraps from this metal would have been left behind.

"The testimonies are so specific on how they made it," he said. "We were able to know what we were looking at."

Results showed that the tunnel was about two feet by two feet – just large enough for what Freund described as an emaciated person to crawl through. The tunnel is approximately 12 to 15 feet below the ground and approximately 100 feet long.

Finding the tunnel would have been impossible without the use of this technology, Freund said.

In addition to the tunnel, Freund and his group also located another burial pit after mapping out the subsurface of the forest floor. This pit was 75 feet wide and about 15 feet deep with the remains of 8,000 people.

"We came in; we knew where it started," he said, noting the group was not certain it would find anything definitive.

In addition to the team of scientists, Freund had several students with him to assist, an important educational opportunity supported by the University of Hartford.

"It's really important we take students out into the field," he said. "The next generation is what we are trying to focus on."

Among the students were an economic major and a political science major. Although they might not have interest in the subject at hand, Freund was glad to share real-world experience with them, including using the infrared technology and teamwork.

"Every single one of the students were brought to the forest to work," Freund said. "Everyday I am teaching them how to use this technology, how the probes connect to the fiber optics. This is where you get what I call the teaching moments. It's that teaching moment when you are in the field, this is about an event in human history."

The students were there to share in the excitement, which came quickly, for on the first day in the field the group found one section of the tunnel.

Freund and his team were staying in an apartment in a building that once was part of a Jewish ghetto. He was told that during the war it was likely 20 people lived in that apartment.

Each morning he and his team set off to the forest where they would spend most of the day. It was long hours, as during the summer in Lithuania the sun does not set until about 11:30 p.m.

"I felt like this is what archeology is really all about. Not the artifacts, the architecture; it's about people."

–Dr. Richard Freund

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Courtesy photo

Dr. Richard Freund (far right in hat) was assisted by several students during an excavation of a tunnel used by Jewish prisoners escaping during World War II.

Knowing what had taken place on this site and the potential for undiscovered burial pits, Freund said he could not eat his lunch or dinner while at the site.

Upon returning to the apartment, the team would process the information from the infrared technology. Each day the results would be sent to labs in Los Angeles and Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Because of the time difference, the previous day's results would be waiting for Freund and his team when they woke up the next morning.

"It was amazing," he said. "Overnight we could determine what we had."

"I've been involved in a lot of big discoveries," Freund said. "For me this is how Galileo must have felt when he looked through his telescope or how Newton [did] sitting in a field. I am looking at something you can't fully prepare yourself to understand. Seeing on this computer screen this tunnel was, it sends chills down my back when I talk about it. You know you have discovered something that was almost like a secret."

While what took place here more than 70 years ago was a gruesome, horrific event, Freund recognized an element of hope.

"It had so much of the hope and courage of the people who did this," he said of the tunnel. "If I were in those circumstances, would I be able to dig a tunnel all night long to get out of a burial pit?"

"It's uplifting in some ways," he said. "Also very daunting. It did create for me a great sense of what heroes really are. These people are really heroic in the classical sense."

Before leaving for Lithuania, Freund spent time talking to the families of the survivors. One woman told him her father never spoke of his experience. It was not until she had seen the 1985 film "Shoah," a documentary about the Holocaust that featured her father, that she asked him to please tell her what he had gone through. It turns out the man was a member of the burning brigade and one day as he was about to burn a body he realized it was his wife, and his children were there, too.

"You feel what must have been a huge amount of grief, guilt he must have felt," Freund said.

Another relative of a tunnel survivor said she felt vindicated when news broke that the tunnel had been found. Her relative tried to share his experience with family but somehow he never felt his family believed he crawled through this tunnel.

It is details like this that Freund said are just as important in preserving as the physical relics of the past.

"I felt like this is what archeology is really all about. Not the artifacts, the architecture; it's about people, understanding people in antiquity and modern times," he said.

"Unfortunately the Holocaust era presents us with an opportunity to research elements of an event that is very near to our own time period," Freund said. "In a very short amount of time we won't have the people left to ask."

He said he plans to travel back to Lithuania next summer to work with archeologists there who are interested in creating a visitor site near the tunnel so that guests can see portions of the tunnel for themselves and "think about hope and courage."

Freund is assisting with another project in Lithuania. He was among a group of scientists who have researched the Great Synagogue in Vilna, Lithuania. Built in the 16th century, a decree at the time prevented synagogues from being taller than any Christian church. To get around this, the synagogue's first and second floors were below street level. From the outside the building met the height requirements, however, the interior proved otherwise. Much of the structure was destroyed during WWII and later the Soviets constructed a school on the site.

"We went in 2015, the synagogue was still there," Freund said of the stories below the ground.

Among his other projects is researching the lost city of Atlantis. Freund will be part of a documentary on this topic with National Geographic, which is being produced by James Cameron.

In the meantime he will be giving a lecture on the tunnel and his work this past summer, "The Secret Escape Tunnel from the Holocaust: The University of Hartford Vilna Excavations Project." The talk will take place at the university's

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Auerbach Auditorium at 7:30 p.m. October 13.

He will also be presenting the same lecture November 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation Emok Shalom, 55 Bushy Hill Road, Simsbury.

During his time in the field at Paneriai, Freund had a crew from "NOVA science series" filming the work he and his team were doing that will be part of a documentary slated to air on PBS in April 2017.

His research on the tunnel will be the subject of a book he is in the process of writing.

Freund, a West Hartford resident, came to the University of Hartford in 1999 as the Maurice Greenberg Professor and director of the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies from the University of Nebraska where he served as chair of the Judaic studies program.

"The center allows us to do amazing research projects around the world," Freund said, adding that he has worked on several projects in Israel, Spain, Poland, Lithuania and Greece. **WHL**

The infrared colors tell researchers what is below the surface at this site of the tunnel entrance.

Courtesy photo

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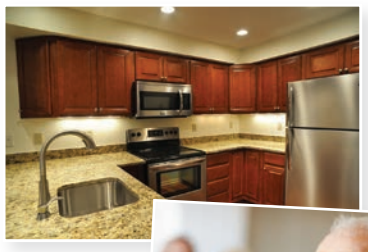

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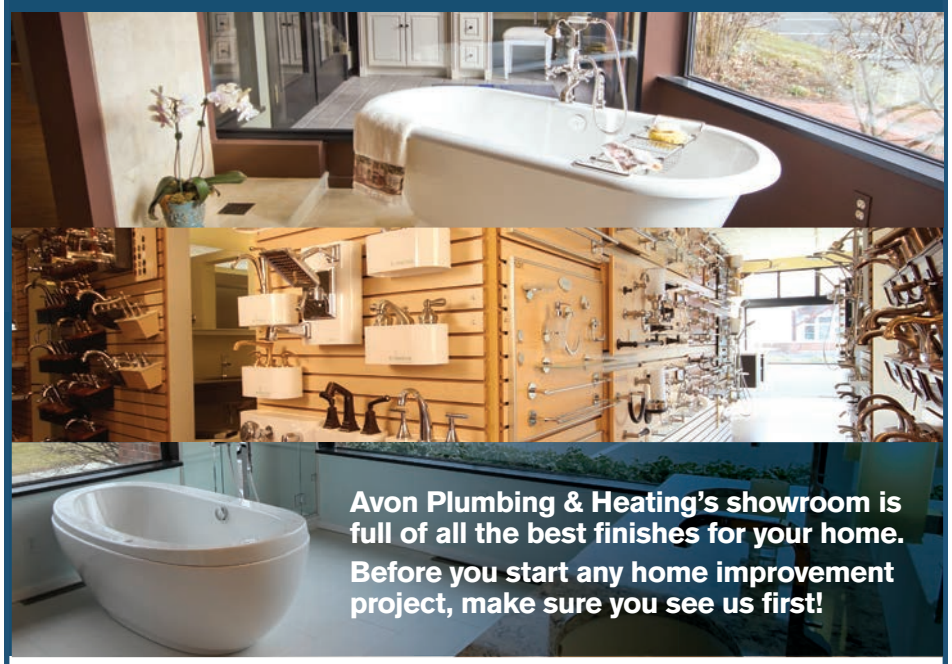

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Work of art

Stefanie Marco's creativity comes out in Kindspin Designs

by Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writer

For the past 14 years artist Stefanie Marco has had a booth at the Celebrate! West Hartford Arts and Craft Show.

Courtesy photo

Every now and then a box shows up on the doorstep of Stefanie Marco's West Hartford home, left there by a friend or neighbor. Inside may be hundreds of beer bottle caps, old buttons, wine corks or keys. If the box has some old folding rulers, all the better. If someone happens to park an old Volkswagen bus outside that would be great, too. They are a favorite.

While others may toss these items in the trash, Marco gives them new life as part of her artwork. She prefers to waste nothing. Old power tools, records and scraps of wood have all had their place in her designs.

"All my life I've done something creative," said Marco, a mixed media artist.

When she left the corporate world in 2004, art became her full-time work.

"It's the best thing ever," she said.

With the support of her husband, Carl Lantz, Marco set up a workshop behind her home and a studio inside her house, and has been busy with her art ever since.

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Explaining why she chose the name Kindspin Designs, she said it comes from the swirls she likes to incorporate in her work and the fact that she thinks "everyone should be kind to each other."

"I am getting inspired by everything around me," Marco said. "When I go to bed my mind is spinning" with ideas, she said.

She creates custom designs for those looking for a unique gifts or something for their home, works for private collections and pieces for businesses. Marco also does some graphic design work and photography.

Other items in her repertoire include wall hangings, mirrors, clocks, frames, jewelry, coat hooks and Lazy Susans. Her motifs include swirling designs, fish, submarines and coffee cups. In addition, Marco enjoys turning a child's drawing into a three-dimensional piece of art.

Marco grew up in Glastonbury and attended Watkinson School. She and her realtor husband settled in West Hartford 10 years ago where they are raising their children, Callie and Flynn, and two dogs, Althea and Mackintosh.

"I am getting inspired by everything around me."
–Stefanie Marco

Now that fall has arrived Marco is back in her workshop after taking off the summer to spend with her children.

Most of Marco's works begin with a piece of wood. She developed a love for the material when she was asked by a friend to contribute some pieces to her restaurant in Middletown. When Marco visited the restaurant to see what other artists had done she immediately noticed there was no wood.

"I went out and bought power tools and taught myself," Marco said.

Power tools are another large component of her work. If she is not using them to cut wood into various shapes for her designs, she is dismantling old power tools and using

Photo by Phyllis Meredith

Artist Stefanie Marco loves power tools and uses them all the time on her wood pieces.

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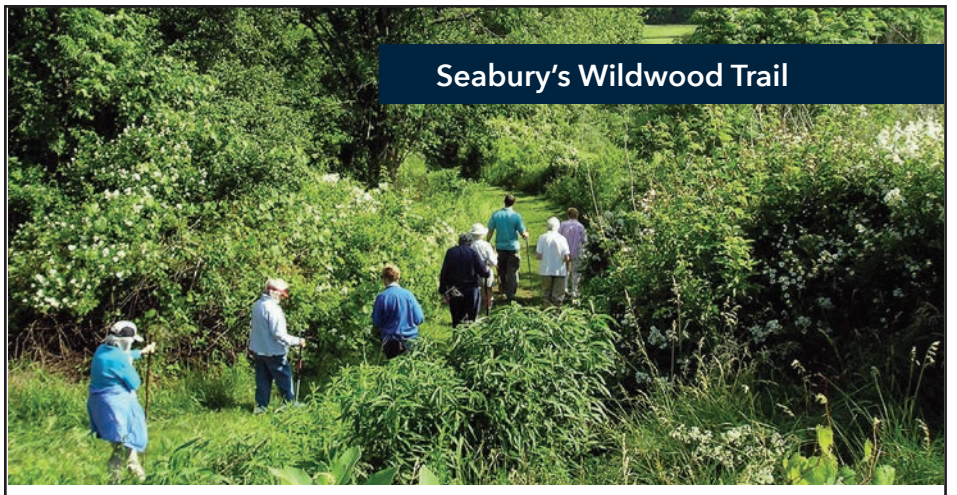

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Additionally, construction is underway on the next two phases of Seabury's expansion, including 68 new independent living residences scheduled to open in the Fall of 2017. **Learn more about how to reserve your future home at our monthly info sessions on every 1st Thursday at 1:30pm and every 3rd Wednesday at 10:30am. Call (860) 243-6081 or (860) 243-4033 for reservations or e-mail info@seaburylife.org**

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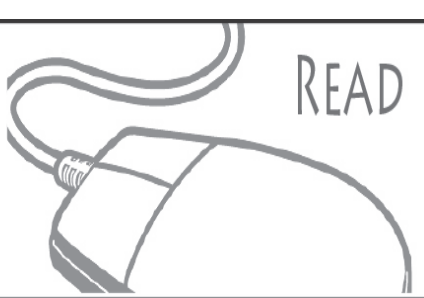
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Bright colors and found items are all incorporated in artists Stefanie Marco's work.

the pieces and parts in her artwork.

Any old folding rulers, even broken ones, are always being sought. She said they remind her of her father and are always on her list of items she is on the hunt to find.

"I love when people look at something and have a connection to it," Marco said. "It's fun to hear the stories, too."

Marco, who for the past 14 years has had a booth at the Celebrate! West Hartford Arts and Crafts Show, said she enjoys listening to customers talk about who they are buying a piece of her work for or why they like a certain item. Sometimes she hears people talk about how something they see in her work reminds them of their own life. Clients will often share why they want a certain item incorporated into a custom piece.

When she is ready to work on an idea, she checks to be sure she has all the supplies she will need. Often she will sketch her design on the piece of wood before she makes a cut. After sanding and priming the wood, she adds layers of bright, colorful paint.

"It makes me feel good," she said of using as many bright and bold colors as she can.

For a recent show she said she tried to create some darker pieces.

"It was a fun challenge," she said.

Once the colors are applied, Marco will add other objects before adding a resin coating, where she works in a clean, well-ventilated space.

To finish each piece Marco, will trim the edges, add a hanger on the back and photograph it for her portfolio. If the piece is being put up for sale, she will add a tag.

When working on a custom piece she wants to ensure she understands what her clients are looking for and if they are open to her interpretation of the instructions.

"I like when they give me a couple of details and say. 'Go for it,'" she said.

Locally Marco has created pieces for the West Harford Public Library, the Noah Webster House, Watkinson School, and local schools and businesses.

Stephanie Blozy, owner of Fleet Feet, met Marco at Celebrate! West Hartford where she discovered her work.

"I loved her funky, fun style," Blozy said.

After the 2011 expansion of her store, Blozy reached out to Marco and commissioned some pieces to hang in the store.

"I didn't want to make it too sterile," Blozy said of her shop. "I wanted a little bit of West Hartford in it."

Marco created several whimsical hooks for the store's dressing rooms and bathroom.

"She is so creative and fun," Blozy said of Marco. "When people walk into Fleet Feet they say the energy is so great; we needed some art to match that energy."

When Marco steps away from her workshop and studio, she continues thinking about art, not only contemplating ideas for future pieces, but ways in which she

If there were a way for artist Stefanie Marco to find a Volkswagen bus for herself, she would do it. In the meantime, she incorporates them into her artwork.

Swirls are a fun motif found in Stefanie Marco's work.

Courtesy photos

can help other local artists.

Two years ago she founded the WeHa Artists Emporium. The idea came to her when she was working in her studio, by herself. She wondered how she could connect with other local artists, how they could network, sell their work and help people find local art to purchase.

The Emporium is a Facebook group, however members also meet in person twice a month.

At the first meeting, Marco asked five artists that she liked to join her at J. Renee Coffee Roasters on Park Road. Today there are 1,200 members on Facebook.

More recently Marco organized a collaborative show at Bin 228 in Hartford, called "Wind and Water." The show runs through November 5, and people can meet the artists September 30 from 5-7 p.m.

"I just love coordinating shows," she said. "I feel like we inspire each other."

She also organizes Artist Mingle events, meeting at Blaze and Bloom on New Park Avenue. This group gets together every other month.

Marco is also planning to host a pop-up holiday show in West Hartford. She is presently looking for space to accommodate the event in early December.

In the past, Marco has collaborated with other local artists in creating a scavenger hunt. Artists were invited to paint rocks and clues where given out via Facebook as to where art seekers could find a decorated rock. Each artist included his or her name and information on the back of the rock. This past spring, the group put together Hidden Houses, this time art enthusiasts sought out lovely, demure houses that were hidden around town. **WHL**

For more information on Stefanie Marco and her work, visit facebook.com/kindspindesign or kindspindesgin.com.

Photo by Kaitlin McCallum

Linguistic hurdles

Dr. Helen Koulidobrova is driven to address issues of access and oppression

by Kaitlin McCallum
Assistant Editor

Helen Koulidobrova, barefoot, resolute and just back from giving a talk on American Sign Language in Venice, is catching up with students in her office at Central Connecticut State University. She gently dismisses a young girl and turns to talk about what it is that she does.

Twice she repeats the words of Bishop John Celders, Connecticut pastor and activist: "You've got to pray with your feet."

"So this is what I try to do," she says. "I get angry about many issues but life is too short to just talk about them. I do what I can in my classroom and my position affords me the opportunity to do the work. I have a Ph.D. so that means I have to use that to get some justice."

Koulidobrova didn't start out angry or wanting to change the world. First, she was a student, leaving her native Ukraine with a degree in English. She tutored elementary and high school students in English and substitute taught. She began to wonder about language acquisition.

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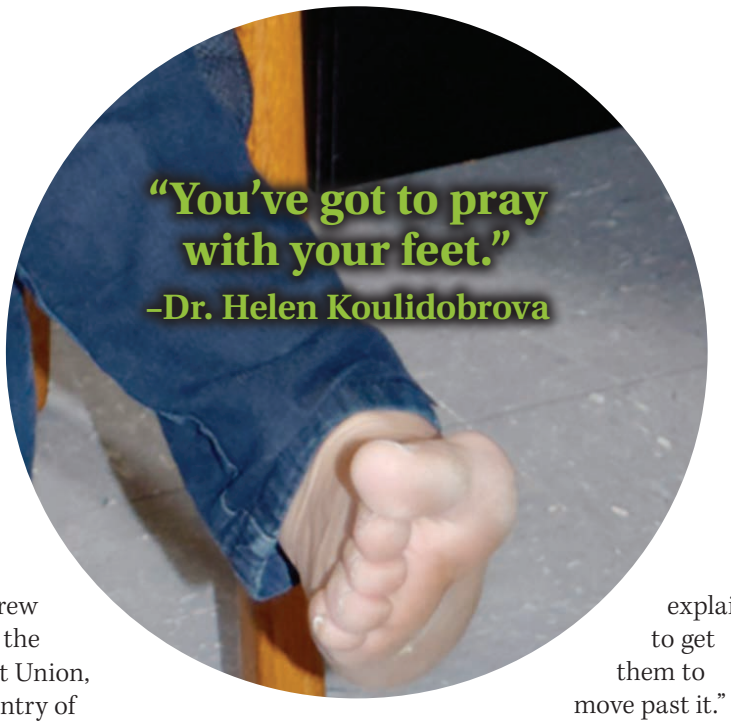

"I grew up in the Soviet Union, a country of many, many languages, and I had always been puzzled by the fact that many people I encountered spoke the Russian language very, very fluently," she said. "The more I got into language learning, the more puzzling this became. Why was my English not progressing as fast as I would have liked while a friend's Russian was progressing very, very fast?"

After a year off, working as a maid in England, she came to the United States and earned a master's degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages. She knew she could teach if she returned to Ukraine, so it seemed like a logical career path.

She taught ESOL at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, an area where refugees were being resettled.

While teaching, Koulidobrova realized her students were asking questions she couldn't answer.

"When you start teaching people who have beginning proficiency, you can point to things and say 'cup' or 'book.' When they make a mistake, you can substitute. When they start making complex sentences and make a mistake and you want to help them understand why they have made an error, you have to know how it works and not only how it works in English but also what's happening in their first language that is guiding them to make that error. But more importantly, what do you need to understand and explain to get them to move past it."

While many of her colleagues chalked it up to "it sounds better," Koulidobrova pursued further study. She earned a Ph.D. in theoretical and experimental linguistics from the University of Connecticut.

That is when she was introduced to her work.

"When I was in that program, I was taking a class in language acquisition and the person who ended up being my dissertation supervisor was talking about a bilingualism seminar, which was right up my alley. Except, she was talking about bilingualism of two different kinds – signed and spoken, whether you would expect the same kind of processes as we see occur in the languages of people who are learning two spoken languages as those who are learning ASL and English ... so I became fascinated. I started learning ASL and the more I learned, the more fascinated I became."

While ASL is not a young language, much linguistic study remains to be done, Koulidobrova said. She switched her concentration from Russian and English to ASL and English.

"From that point I became a person not just interested in linguistics but all the related issues that arise working on a language that belongs to a community that has been oppressed forever and ever and ever. That is how I ended up involved in policy issues."

Koulidobrova uses her post to work for greater access and

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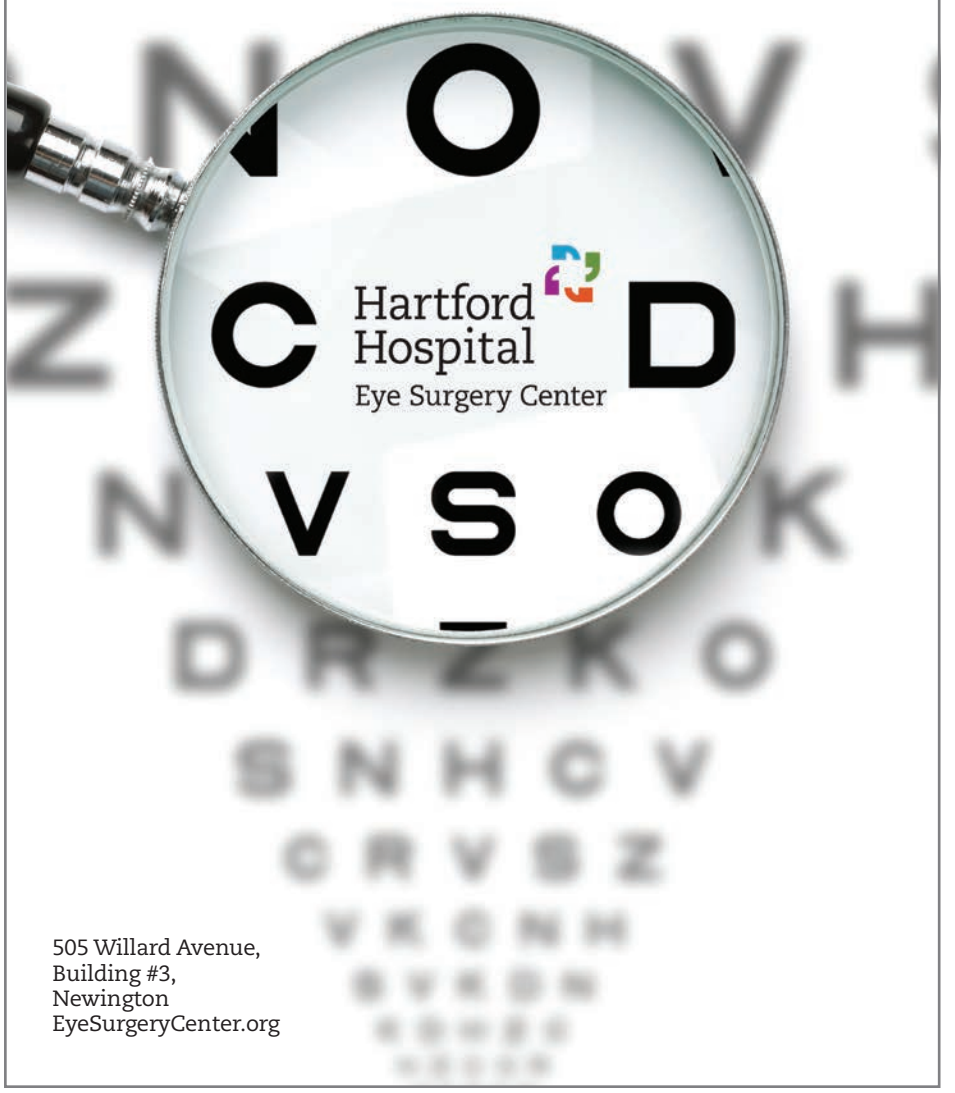

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equity for several student populations.

She is currently an adviser to the state on how to begin to close the achievement gap between native and non-native speakers.

"Connecticut is the richest state but it has one of the largest achievement gaps," she said.

Koulidobrova was one of two linguistic experts and one of three academics appointed by former House Speaker J. Brendan Sharkey in 2015 to a task force looking at English language acquisition and educational equity.

As a result of the group's work, money was allocated for a pilot program spanning two years, in which CCSU and four school districts with the highest numbers of English-language learners collaborate to train teachers.

"Last year I taught for two days – two eight-hour days, 60 general education teachers. Every one of their classes has at least 30 percent ESL learners and the vast majority don't have that training," she said.

Through her work at the capitol, she discovered something shocking.

"One day it came to my attention that the funding system directly excludes kids who are English-language learners but speak ASL."

That is through the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires "English learners receive appropriate language assistance services to become proficient in English and to participate equally in the standard instructional program within a reasonable period of time," according to a U.S. Department of Education fact sheet. Identified students must be tested to confirm they are English learners and provided with the services of qualified teachers.

"One day it came to my attention that the funding system directly excludes kids who are English-language learners but speak ASL."

–Dr. Helen Koulidobrova

"There is a 'dear colleague letter' from the U.S. Department of Education that says 'but if the child is deaf and was born and raised in the U.S., that money is not to be used,'" she said.

Koulidobrova says she can understand the origins of the policy.

"If people don't know that [ASL] is a language in its own right with its own grammar system, they might think of ASL as this accommodation for the deaf. I suppose you could understand why this might have started. ... But we know ASL is a language in its own right and is typologically very different. It's not a language for deafness."

The "audist" view creates a chain of oppression, she explains. She describes a hearing child who grew up with deaf parents using ASL and a Puerto Rican child who grew up using Spanish walking into a school. Both will have imperfect English. The student from the Puerto Rican family will be funneled into an English language program and have the opportunity to progress. The child who uses ASL as her native language will most often be put into special education.

"Anecdotally, if you talk to codas [children of deaf adults], many of them ended up in speech pathology. On the one hand, over 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing adults. But on the other hand, the vast majority of deaf parents have hearing children."

Since ASL is the third most common language used in the United States, it is a more common scenario than one might think, and the systemic discrimination has terrible consequences.

"Here is this hearing child who has just been through speech pathology precisely because the

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school system inadvertently made it clear to them that their parents' language is not really a language; that's why they're in [special education]. So what kind of a relationship with the deaf community is this going to result in? Lots and lots and lots of hearing children who have very little communication with their parents."

The ramifications are myriad. Pediatricians tend to recommend children not be taught sign language because it might impair their English. Instead, cochlear implants are favored, Koulidobrova said.

She lauds American School for the Deaf in West Hartford as the birthplace of ASL. Its goal, she says, is to graduate students capable of functioning in an English-speaking world but the school is unable to even apply for funding for second-language teaching.

For deaf students, even more than other children learning another language, inadequate language training is disastrous.

"Everywhere else, if you don't give instruction, the kids are at least surrounded by [the language]. But not deaf kids … and to my knowledge, there is no mandate that requires teachers of the deaf know anything about second-language acquisition."

That results in students being taught English by people who have never been trained to teach English. That, among other things, results in an average reading level of the U.S.-born deaf adults to be that of fourth grade, according to a 2005 study.

Lack of teacher training is one causal issue Koulidobrova sees. The other is language deprivation. While 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents, Koulidobrova says 80 percent of the parents never learn to sign.

"By the time the child is 2 1/2 years old, let's push and say 4, they know everything there is to know about their language. But the vast majority of deaf kids are utterly deprived of language for their first few years of life."

To address such issues, she is working on a paper requested by the Journal of Language.

While work on these issues of access and oppression has just begun, Koulidobrova has some successes.

Recently CCSU has approved use of an interpreter app, which allows deaf students to at any time – say, while asking a question after class or speaking with a counselor about an urgent financial aid document – call up a live interpreter in Washington D.C. to translate. Previous use of a translator required a two-week prior notice, so the app allows students greater flexibility and greater access.

The university has also just recently agreed to accept ASL to satisfy its foreign language requirement.

And, she's seeing success and finding hope in her students.

"I find the vast majority [of teaching students] are passionate and they want to help change the system, which is a fertile ground for me because I'm all in the business of let's change the system. I find that the system of funding education of English language learning is utterly unfair and I do my best to not only expose my teachers to that, but also help them chart a way for changing that. I hope to be able to say through the work in my classes folks change their minds about many things."

When she starts to talk to most people, Koulidobrova says they easily agree change is needed.

"I am seeing change. There's a lot of kicking and screaming as well but I am seeing change - in my students, in their classes, in the legislature … on both sides of the aisle. Maybe I'm wearing people down or maybe it's finally clear." **WHL**

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Building a better town

Developer's vision changed West Hartford Center

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Courtesy photo

Seymour Sard, founder of Sard Corporation, saw a picture in a trade magazine of a small building on Long Island where the developer put parking under the structure.

"I put my family in the car one day, drove to New London, got on the ferry to Long Island and drove probably 30 or 40 miles to this building," he said.

The pictures he took served as inspiration for his first office building in 1967. Prior to that, he solely built homes in West Hartford.

"Those pictures gave me the idea because land was so precious in West Hartford and the lots were so small. I could maximize the use of the land by putting parking under the buildings," Sard said.

"I came up with the thought of trying to create suburban office space in West Hartford Center. I bought three old homes on [the corner of] South Main Street and Ellsworth Road. I got the zoning to put up the building that now stands at 61 South Main Street. As I had guessed, several large companies, together with some local doctors, filled up my building before it was finished."

From then on, he built an office building every year for several years in and around the Center. Most of the tenants came from downtown Hartford, he said. They didn't want to commute and liked the environment of the Center.

In 1970, 41 North Main Street was completed; 18 North Main Street was built in 1971. Their contemporary design – raised on stilts to allow surface parking and extensive use of glass – made them strikingly different. They changed not only the look, but also the makeup of the Center.

He also built a smaller office building at 854 Farmington Avenue.

The opening of Westfarms mall in 1974 led to a deterioration of the Center.

"The Center was failing back in the '70s. Everyone was going to Westfarms mall; retailers were moving out of the Center," Town Manager Ronald Van Winkle said.

Sard built another glass building at 65 LaSalle Road in 1978, replacing the A&P Supermarket and package store that closed. Then came 1001 Farmington Avenue in 1985 in the vacant lot between Luna Pizza and S.K. Lavery Appliance Co., and the TownCentre building and parking garage on South Main Street in 1991. These three combined retail on the ground level with offices above.

When it was being built, the TownCentre building at 29 South Main Street was the largest single individual commercial retail and office building in any Hartford suburb. The four-story building gave a new look to South Main Street. Original tenants included Top Nosh Deli, Green Mountain Coffee Roaster, Malibu Magic Yogurt and Banknorth. Sard also built an 880-car precast concrete parking garage behind it.

"That used to be a First National food store site. It had been redeveloped by Mr. Sard into a modern office building. Some of the most coveted office in West Hartford is in that building," Van Winkle said, calling Sard "visionary because we had nothing like that in West Hartford Center."

"It was an amazing change," the town manager said. "You had a food store in a big empty lot; he built a parking garage in West Hartford Center."

Sard developed, constructed, leased and managed each building. Each one he built also required him to apply for zoning changes because office buildings were not allowed.

"He had battle after battle," Van Winkle said. "It took quite an effort on his part to get the town to see his vision for the community. Zoning changes are something the town, 20 and 30 years ago, had real problems with [and] didn't want to change.

"Office workers bring shoppers. As we built offices, we brought

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Seymour Sard in the Center

The total square footage of commercial buildings Seymour Sard developed over the years in West Hartford Center total more than 500,000 square feet, plus an 880-car parking garage being the Town Centre building.

1967
61 South Main Street
25,000 sq ft
offices

1970
41 North Main Street
20,000 sq ft
offices

854 Farmington Avenue
8,000 sq ft
offices

1971
18 North Main Street
20,000 sq ft
offices

1978
65 LaSalle Road
55,000 sq ft
retail and office

1985
1001 Farmington Avenue
17,000 sq ft
retail and office

1991
29 South Main Street
180,000 sq ft
retail, office, garage

This glass building on LaSalle Road helped revive the Center in 1978 after Westfarms mall opened three miles away.

This was the first of three commercial building Seymour Sard built on stilts in the center of town.

Photos by Lynn Woike

customers. ... They'd step out of the office and have lunch, get their dry cleaning" and shop for other necessary items. "It was part of what turned West Hartford Center around and made a strong retail-restaurant market."

With elected officials reluctant to change zoning rules, Sard had to demonstrate how changing them would add value to the community.

Every project was approved.

"There had always been an enormous demand for office space," Van Winkle said. "He was part of that future that West Hartford became. ... He played a major role in West Hartford for a very long time. He's one of only a handful of owner-developers who grew and changed our community."

The town manager concluded, "It was because of who he was and his vision and his ability to communicate those visions" that the Center changed.

"I think it changed from a sleepy, dying suburban town," Sard said.

"[T]he building of the mall took a lot of business away from the stores in West Hartford Center. Many of the stores left West Hartford as [Westfarms] mall was being built. So I think I kind of revitalized West Hartford Center. People were moving to the suburbs so that working and living in the same town made it quite nice for people," he added.

Now it's easier for everyone else, Van Winkle said, "because Seymour Sard laid the ground for that many years ago."

Sard spent his entire life around buildings.

"I grew up with a strong feeling about construction because my dad and grandfather were in the house-wrecking business," he said, noting "it's just the reverse" of his own work.

In his early 20s, he began building houses in 1951.

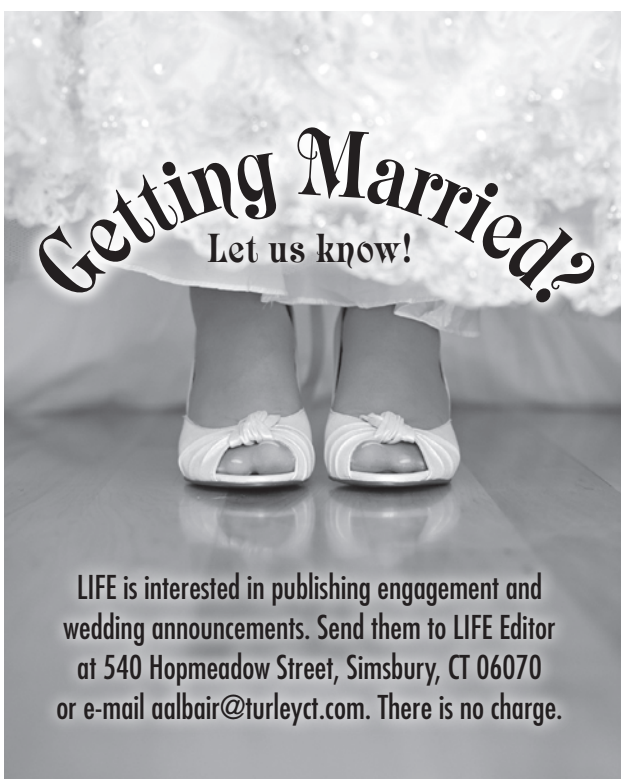
"I developed quite a few streets and many, many homes, including the Skyview Apartments in Bishops Corner [and Woodbury Condominiums just west of Bishops Corner], Astronaut Village, ... Proctor Drive, Skyline Drive, Brightview Drive and Nursery Drive. I also built and developed Juniper Lane off Mountain Road."

There were other homes scattered on lots throughout town, on streets that include Sunset Farm, Buckingham and Trumbull lanes, Balfour Drive, Pheasant Chase, Quail Hollow, Cliffmore Road and Sulgrave Road.

After the homes and the office buildings, Sard did a lot of commercial construction for the city of Hartford, the state of Connecticut and the town of West Hartford.

He also built Veterans Memorial Ice Skating Rink, Kennedy Memorial Park on Oakwood Avenue and the Williams Ford Inc. dealership on 50 Raymond Road where Whole Foods is now.

His son, Jeff, is following in his footsteps.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This office building is one of two Seymour Sard erected on Farmington Avenue.

The largest mixed-use building, known as TownCentre, has 180,000 square feet of retail and office space and an 880-car parking garage behind it.

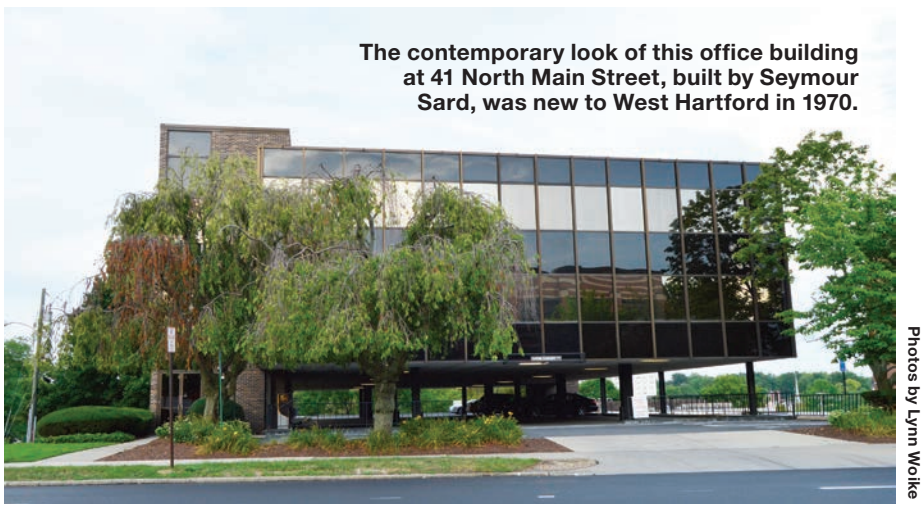
Although he formally joined the company after college, Jeff Sard said his on-the-job training started when he was a small child, visiting houses and other projects with his father on the weekend, checking up on progress. At 13, he began working on various job sites. Now he is president and CEO of the company.

In 2005, the company sold its West Hartford portfolio of commercial properties to an out-of-town investor; the office moved to Farmington, and later, to Avon.

"We are currently building a 10-lot subdivision on East Maxwell Drive on land that we acquired from the American School for the Deaf," Jeff Sard said. "We just recently completed last year a 20,000-square-foot medical building in Canton leased to the UConn Health Center."

Seymour Sard, 89, retired 20 years ago and spends part of the year in Florida.

"When I go to Connecticut, I still go to the office every morning, read the New York Times and pray someone in the office will ask me a question," he said. **WHL**



The contemporary look of this office building at 41 North Main Street, built by Seymour Sard, was new to West Hartford in 1970.

Photos by Lynn Woike

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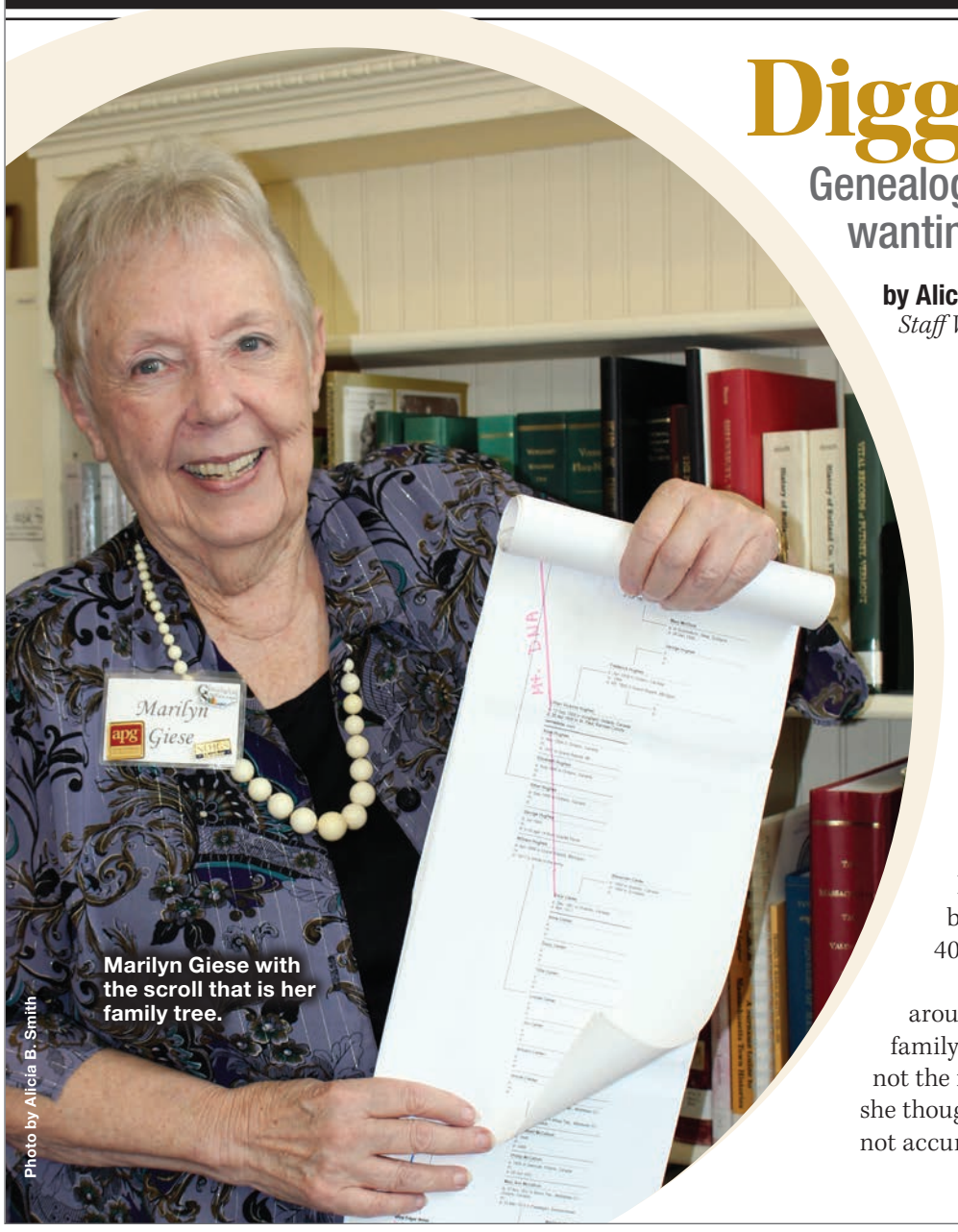

Marilyn Giese with the scroll that is her family tree.

Photo by Alicia B. Smith

Digging for family gold

Genealogy is a popular pastime for those wanting to find their roots

by Alicia B. Smith
Staff Writer

Marilyn Giese has Scottish roots. At least until the day she learned from a DNA test that the Scots in her family were actually Irish. So now she has Irish roots.

Giese would never have known this bit of family information from her father's side if she had not begun researching her family history, a pursuit she has been engaged in for the past 40 years.

Giese is not alone in digging around for information on where family members come from and is not the first to find the information she thought she always knew was not accurate.

When a cousin of hers began researching her father's family it piqued Giese's interest too, so she began a hunt of her own, eventually becoming a genealogist, working professionally in the field for the past 12 years. Today the Avon resident works at the Simsbury Free Library assisting others in their searches.

"I try to get people enthused about it," she said.

Giese assists those doing searches of their own in finding resources and websites that will help them along in gathering information.

Many people she has worked with are interested in discovering if they might be related to royalty. Others are curious about where their ancestors came from.

"Once you start working on your family, you never finish," she said.

It might seem intimidating to begin such a search, but Giese said that it

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does not have to be. For starters, begin with what you know about yourself – your date of birth, where you were born. Then move on to your parents, then the grandparents.

Another important component is to talk to family. Find some time to chat with aunts and uncles or grandparents. Ask them questions about their childhood, where they lived, when they moved or what year a relative passed away. Take notes, too.

Giese recently spoke with an uncle of hers who reminded her that her father had worked in shipbuilding in Superior, Michigan. This one detail sparked a memory for Giese who recollected one day, in 1943, as a child she was at the shipyard with her father; the business was about to launch a ship with great fanfare. Special guests that day were the Dionne quintuplets from Canada.

"They walked in front of me with bottles of water to christen the ships," Giese said. "I remember that. It was connecting with my uncle that brought that memory to life."

"You have to talk to family members, make that connection while they are still alive," she continued.

"People get hooked on it. Once you get started on it, a lot of people keep going on it. There doesn't seem to be an end. It's a hobby, an avocation."
–Patrice Celli

When not busy researching her family history, Giese enjoys weaving. Through her research she learned one of her grandmothers was a weaver and that the large wheeled loom that Giese and her sister had played with as children had belonged to her. Giese had the loom refurbished and now it has a place in her home.

"I never got to know my grandmother, she died before I was born," Giese said. "It gives me a tie in. I have her wheel. I have a blanket from wool she had spun at that wheel."

Speaking of her research, she said, "It's been a fascinating journey and it can be for anyone."

There are resources available online or by doing some old-fashioned legwork.

In addition to your own birth certificate, check to see if your parents have theirs. Other helpful documents include marriage and death certificates. They can all be found in the town clerk's office of the town where a person was born, married or died.

Giese is available at the Simsbury Free Library on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the second and fourth Saturdays each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. In addition, she spends the first Wednesday of every month from 1-3 p.m. at the Avon Free Public Library, 281 Country Club Road, conducting a drop-in session for those interested in conducting research.

"She is very good, very patient," Reference Librarian Patrice Celli said. "She is here to help anybody who basically has questions on genealogy."

Celli said the interest in genealogy has always existed, and that it has been increasing.

She credits this to ancestry.com commercials about individuals who had been convinced they were of a certain heritage only to find out, as she did, that their family backgrounds were something different.

In addition to the assistance Giese can offer those conducting their research, the Avon library has information in its Marian M. Hunter History Room that can help. Among its collection are Avon High School yearbooks going back to the 1960s, an Avon city directory, some cemetery records, old maps, some family diaries (among them from the Miller, Bishop and Woodford families) and newspaper clippings. In addition, the library has access to the Hartford Courant going back to the 1800s.

Celli has patrons who package their research to pass it on to other family members. Some will create a scrapbook or a bound volume with their information.

"People get hooked on it," Celli said. "Once you get started on it, a lot of people keep going on it. There doesn't seem to be an end. It's a hobby, an avocation."

In West Hartford, a relatively young town incorporated in 1854, records only go back that far. For information prior to that, West Hartford Town Clerk Essie Labrot recommends doing research at the State Department of Vital Records in Hartford. She went on to explain that birth records less than 100 years old will require proof of identity and relationship before any information can be given out.

Social Security information on marriage and death certificates has to be redacted, Labrot said.

"Those seeking information should have name, including maiden name, address, date of birth, death or marriage of the person they are looking for documentation on," Labrot said. "If the record they are seeking is a birth record, they must produce the required ID."

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The Simsbury Free Library has several books on families that lived in the area or directories that may have information to help when researching family history.

Photo by Alicia B. Smith

record vaults in the local town clerks office, however, for a $20 fee certified copies of records can be purchased.

Her office gets a few requests a month from people researching their families. Many times, however, they do not have the correct dates or discover their family member was born in Hartford not West Hartford.

West Hartford resident Jan Augusta had never thought of researching her family until in graduate school when one of her assigned projects was to create a family tree.

"People in the class had all these elaborate family trees and knew their great-great-grandparents and all this wild stuff," Augusta said, adding that at the time she did not know the name of her great-grandparents.

"That spurred me into digging deeper into my family tree and my husband's," she said.

Since that time, she has put together five family histories and distributed them to family members. These include researching her maternal and paternal families along with her husband's maternal and paternal families as well as that of his stepfather.

Part of her research was done when she and her husband traveled to Poland, Slovakia and the Ukraine.

"It just takes you on a road," she said.

Augusta began with talking to her mother and eventually an uncle and a cousin of her father.

Before traveling overseas, she wrote a translated letter

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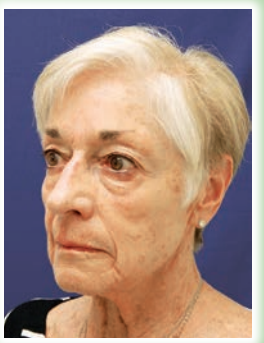

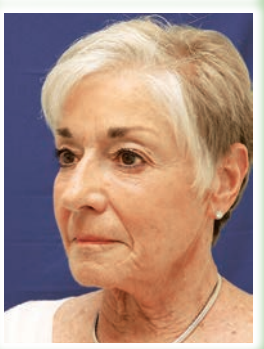

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to a Ukrainian village mayor regarding her family. The reply noted that the names were common to the area. When she arrived in the village, she met the mayor and family, and was surprised to see many people living in log houses with an outhouse.

"We felt it was an incredible journey; our grandparents came here and we went back and finished the cycle," she said.

Among some of the things she learned about her ancestors is that her grandmother never had any desire to return to her native Poland. She also learned that her grandmother had several siblings who all died before the age of 5.

Augusta also learned that her parents had married in secret because her father had just gotten out of the Army after World War II, and her mother was still serving in the Army Nurse Corps and was not allowed to marry. Augusta looked into this bit of family history when she realized she had never seen any photos of their wedding day.

"I just found out two or three years ago," she said.

In another case, an aunt of hers had been told her mother had died in childbirth, when in reality, Augusta discovered the woman had died in the flu epidemic of 1918 when her aunt was a toddler.

Her husband's parents had divorced when he was a child and he had never met or seen a photo of his biological father until they visited the Ukraine and some distant relatives there had one.

From a practical standpoint, Augusta learned documented information is better than information based on someone's often-inaccurate memory.

At the time she started her search, about 17 years ago, there was little information online. Augusta made several trips to the Federal Records Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts to do research. She also visited the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Bloomfield, which has archives of records from churches and synagogues all over the world. At the time, she would stop by the church in Bloomfield and order microfilm and go back three weeks later when it arrived for her to view.

Since then, any information she wants to check can be done through websites like ancestory.com, familysearch.org, mocavo.com and stephenmorse.com. She has also found ethnic groups that share family information on Facebook. Another options is findagrave.com, which can help discover where a family member is buried and the dates on their gravestone.

Based on her experience, Augusta suggests that those doing research have a goal, such as finding the answers to two specific questions. She also warned that two questions might get answers that then create more questions.

Or you simply may discover something you did not know. After having her DNA tested through ancestry.com, Augusta learned that she is 5 percent Scandinavian; she had no idea.

"I just have great admiration for them coming here and am grateful for what we have," Augusta said of her family.

Tracy Agreda's family was among the first to arrive here – her ancestors descended from Pilgrims. This is what sparked her to begin the quest of learning her family's history.

The West Hartford resident began with a document her grandmother had, information on the back of an old picture frame.

"It gave direct linage of the Peabodys, her maiden name," Agreda said. From there she searched local records and went online for more information, including at ancestry.com.

"I learned that we were direct descendants of Priscilla Mullins Alden, wife to John Alden. I also learned that the first baby born in the new world was from Priscilla and her name was Elizabeth – my daughter's name – and that she had several children afterwards. Interesting fact that although my recent family name was always Peabody, some time in 1590 it was spelled Paybody, changes to Peabodie in 1669 and to the Peabody spelling on 1702," she said.

Agreda was able to trace her family all the way back to 1590 in St. Albars, England.

For those starting their own search she advises that they be patient and expect to pay to get copies of some documents. WHL

Checklist

Marilyn Giese provides her clients with a research checklist of places and documents to find information on family.

- Cemetery
- Census
- Church Records
- Court Records
- Education
- Employment
- Home Records
- Immigration
- Land Records
- Legal Papers
- Libraries
- Licenses
- Locations
- Military
- Newspapers
- Probate
- Tax Record

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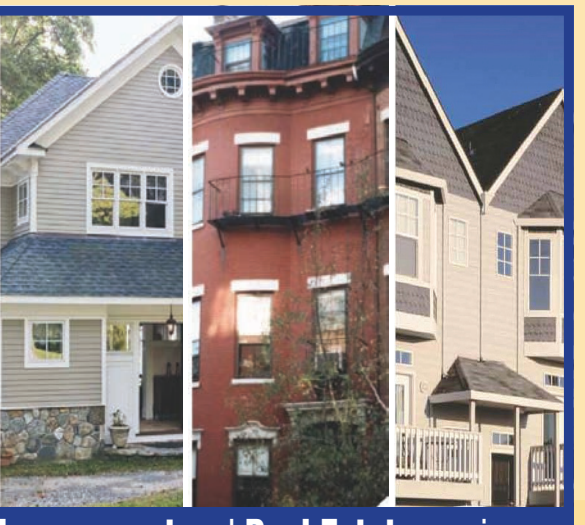

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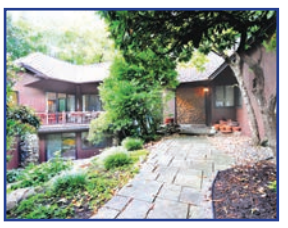

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What nutrition professionals eat

Pie and candy have place on the menu

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Every day there seems to be a new diet book or plan that everyone is talking about. Figuring out what's best to eat can be a challenge, so LIFE went to the source to ask some health professionals what they eat on a typical day. While everyone's nutritional needs are different, you might find inspiration with these real-world sample menus.

Nutrition Katryna – courtesy photo

Katryna Minski, a Registered Dietitian/Certified Diabetes Educator at Hartford Hospital in Glastonbury, said her biggest tip is to eat throughout the day. "Don't skip meals," she advised. "Eat regularly every three to four hours. Set reminders in your phone so you don't forget."

She also drinks water infused with cucumber and mint throughout the day, usually about 48 ounces.

Breakfast: Prosciutto-wrapped mini frittata muffin made with prosciutto, lots of diced veggies (her favorites include kale, tomato and mushrooms) and a sprinkle of cheese. "These egg cups can be made ahead and are a great grab-and-go breakfast for busy weekday mornings. I recommend using the silicone muffin sheets," she said. She also has 12 ounces of Colombian coffee with a splash of whole milk.

Snack: Emerald Nuts 100-calorie pack vanilla roasted almonds and half cup of blackberries.

Lunch: Arnold whole-wheat Sandwich Thins roll, two slices deli-sliced Boar's Head Cracked Pepper Mill smoked turkey breast, one slice of sharp provolone cheese, a handful of arugula, Hellmann's light mayo, lightly spread. Served with Sabra single serving cup hummus (original flavor) and sliced veggies (baby carrots, sugar snap peas, mini bell peppers, cherry tomatoes) and a 12-ounce can of Polar pomegranate-flavored seltzer.

Snack: Small container of Dannon Oikos Triple Zero Salted Caramel Greek Yogurt.

Dinner: Four ounces of baked chicken parmesan with zucchini noodles. She breads the chicken with almond meal and spices. "I love my spiralizer. It makes eating veggies fun." she said. 16 ounces of water.

Favorite treat: One package of Dole Dippers dark chocolate covered frozen banana slices (100 calories)

Nutritionist York: Photo by UConn-Health/Janine Gelineau

Linda York, a Registered Dietician/Certified Diabetes Educator with the UConn Health outpatient department, noted that exercise is crucial to maintaining a healthy weight. "Exercise is medicine," she said, advocating for a half hour of aerobic exercise each day. "If you do anything extra, that's great, but at least half an hour. If you think of it as medicine, it becomes a habit. You will maintain your weight so you can eat something you want." That includes sweets and other treats. York said she is careful not to keep trigger foods in the house. "I tend not to keep anything in the house that I really like. I tend to go out and get it," she said of her favorite treats. She also drinks a lot of water.

Breakfast: Two slices raisin toast, one teaspoon of Smart Balance margarine. A cup of coffee with skim milk, no sugar. Or a cup of old-fashioned oatmeal with one teaspoon of brown sugar and one-half cup of skim milk and frozen berries or a sliced banana, with coffee. On weekends, she enjoys omelets with two large eggs, vegetables, hot sauce and Cabot light cheese with two slices toast with Smart Balance margarine.

Lunch: A "big" salad with two to three cups of vegetables, as well as one-half to one cup of fruit, and protein, such as chicken or tuna. No dressing. She also enjoys "some kind of starch," for example, croutons or a small bag of Cape Cod reduced-fat chips.

Snack: If she wants something sweet, she'll have a Quaker Oat 90-calorie granola bar with coffee. She tries to stay under 150 calories for the snack.

Dinner: York's biggest meal. Most days she'll enjoy four ounces of wine with dinner, which is often a pasta dish with tomato sauce without any meat. She'll do a quick stir fry with eggplant to add to the sauce, which she'll season with fresh basil, garlic powder and Italian seasoning, topped with fresh Parmesan. She admits to liking white pasta and usually chooses linguini. On other days, she'll make a lemon chicken, cooked in a little oil, which she'll have along with a carb, such as pasta, a potato or sweet potato, along with half a plate of cooked vegetables, such as broccoli or asparagus, which might be frozen or fresh. She also enjoys poached salmon.

Snack: Around 9 p.m., she'll have a Chobani Greek yogurt, such as black cherry or coconut. She might also have another bag of Cape Cod chips. Once in a while, she'll enjoy a Fudgsicle or small ice cream sandwich. "If I'm still hungry I have a cup of tea," she said.

Favorite treat: Pie, such as blueberry pie. "But I wouldn't have the whole thing in the house; I love it so much," she said. She also enjoys French cheeses. "You just have to have control and ... don't have a lot of that stuff in the house."

Nutritionist Renee – courtesy photo

Renée J. Bordeaux, a registered dietitian (RD), Certified dietitian-nutritionist (CD-N) and certified personal trainer (CPT), is owner and president of Bordeaux Nutrition in Newington (bordeauxnutrition.com). She is a fan of "Paleo Diet" as outlined by Dr. Loren Cordain, Ph.D. "I have added my own twist, coining the phrase Paleoesque™ when working with clients who are transitioning stepwise from a typical high-carb American diet to a healthier, paleo-centric lifestyle. 'Paleo' refers to the Paleolithic era approximately 10,000 years ago when humans were still hunter-gatherers, before the age of agriculture and increased grains in our diet. Once humans began to increase grains in our diet, we began to see increased digestive diseases and inflammation which is the very basis of disease," she explained. "My biggest tip for women's nutrition is to go Paleo. A Paleo diet focuses on nutrient-dense, lower-carb foods that are anti-inflammatory. Women are at higher risk for developing inflammatory/autoimmune conditions. Following a Paleo lifestyle will decrease these risks."

Breakfast: Her "Caveman Cereal:" one-half cup of fruit such as applesauce or berries or one medium banana with one-quarter to one-third cup nuts or seeds (any nuts except for peanuts, which she noted are "legumes that are inflammatory and not nuts") for protein and an omega fat source. On other days, she will have five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, chicken or pork with one to two cups of leftover vegetables, such as spaghetti squash or acorn squash. If she's having a lower-carb veggie, such as spinach, she'll add about a half-cup of fruit. She also drinks coffee with almond milk.

Snack: Two tablespoons of nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit with one tablespoon of nuts/

Just for Women

seeds or half an avocado with grape tomatoes. She drinks water or herbal tea.

Lunch: Five to six ounces of leftover grass-fed beef, pork, chicken, fish, tuna fish or seafood with approximately two cups of non-starchy vegs (spinach, broccoli, cauliflower or greens) with approximately one-half cup starchy vegetable such as winter squash, beets, carrots or Brussels sprouts. Vegetables are drizzled with one to two tablespoons of olive, coconut or sesame seed oil for flavor.

Snack: Two tablespoon nuts/seeds or one-half cup fruit. Occasionally, she will have one square of gluten-free, dairy-free 80 percent cocoa chocolate with one tablespoon almonds. Also, water, decaf coffee with almond milk or herbal tea.

Dinner: Very similar to lunch with one glass of wine.

Favorite treat: One-half cup of gluten-free, dairy-free coconut or almond based "ice cream" with nuts or two gluten-free, dairy-free cookies, from Pamela's Products or Aleia's. Another favorite treat is gluten-free, dairy-free dark chocolate "bark thins."

Nutrition Natalie: courtesy photo

Natalie Kebalo, MS, RDN (Registered Dietitian-Nutritionist) at Hartford HealthCare, Jefferson House in Newington, advises, "Get back to the basics as much as you can. Cooking at home with fresh ingredients that are not processed will eliminate the extra calories, fat, sugar and additives, such as artificial colors or flavors, that people are much more conscious of today than ever before." She usually drinks at least eight cups of water per day, mostly between meals.

Breakfast: Brewed coffee with 2 percent milk, one cup of water, two boiled eggs, wheat toast (Freihofer's 100 percent Whole Wheat Bread), two kiwi fruits.

Lunch: Mixed salad greens with leftover grilled steak, tomatoes, half of an avocado and one tablespoon of Italian dressing. One cup of water.

Snack: Whole milk Greek Yogurt from Stop & Shop with a teaspoon of honey.

Dinner: "Spaghetti" (noodles made from yellow squash using a Veggetti spiralizer) sautéed with olive oil and diced garlic, with homemade tomato sauce and meatballs (made with half turkey and half beef), one tablespoon of grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese from Stew Leonard's, one cup of water. "I love fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season, like the yellow squash, peaches, and tomatoes." she said. "They are much more tasteful and usually cheaper in the supermarket or farmers market."

Dessert/Snack: Soft-serve vanilla/chocolate ice cream from the local dairy bar. She gets a kid-sized "since they love to give extra" and a fresh peach. WHL

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Focus on fitness

Expert advice for women of all ages

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Exercise is an important part of any person's regular routine.

Swimming, biking, hiking, yoga: everyone has a personal preference of how they like to stay in shape.

When planning an exercise regimen, in addition to choosing something that will keep one motivated, it's important to consider the physiological needs of the body as it ages.

"For women in their 20s, a lifestyle that includes regular exercise and daily activity is vital," said Jennifer Braun, a certified physical therapist at Anytime Fitness in West Hartford.

"Exercise regimens should include a combination of strength, cardiovascular and metabolic accelerated resistance training for a well-rounded program. Strength is especially important for maintaining strong and healthy bones and setting the body up for prevention of osteoporosis as women age.

"Women have a higher risk of developing osteoporosis – the breakdown of bone to become fragile due to loss of bone tissue. When strength training is started in their 20s and maintained, women are less likely to develop osteoporosis early on and can maintain a more active lifestyle," Braun said.

As years pass and life gets more complicated, it can be difficult to stay on track. Exercise may become less of a priority, but women are encouraged to fight that trend.

"Most fitness trainers say that a comprehensive wellness program includes cardio two to three days per week, strength training a minimum of two days per week and stretching seven days per week. But 30-somethings are busy with careers, families, and homes, so their time is precious, to say the least," said Maggie Durbas, who has a personal training background and owns Journey of Yoga LLC in Simsbury. She recommends yoga for busy

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women in their 30s.

"If time is an issue, practicing yoga for an hour two to three times a week can do triple duty and help with strengthening, stretching and even cardio, never mind the myriad of other health benefits," she said.

"Yoga is far more than simply stretching. Depending on the type of class, it can definitely be considered strength training. For example, power and vinyasa both can be strengthening, if the poses are challenging and held for at least 30 seconds. If the vinyasa class is flowing the entire time, like Ashtanga – from which vinyasa was derived – it can also be a cardiovascular workout."

Your 40s are a time you should be focused on becoming your healthiest, said Kevin Kosis, a certified exercise physiologist with a bachelor's degree in exercise science at Designed Training in Glastonbury.

"Your 40s are when your body starts to go through changes. For women especially, premenopausal levels start to change, calcium levels and bone density start to drop off. Osteoporosis rates nearly double after 40, breast cancer rates exponentially rise after 40, and cardiovascular risk factors elevate after 45. But there's an easy fix for that: exercise," he said.

He recommends starting with squats three times a week, using light weights and doing three sets of 15 repetitions each. "Slowly start increasing weight when you're comfortable and decrease to 10 repetitions," Kosis said.

Studies regarding preventative care in breast cancer show physically active people are less likely to receive a diagnosis, and High Intensity Interval Training has proven to be beneficial.

Decreasing stress levels will also do wonders, and again exercise helps with that, he said, adding that a healthy diet is also important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

As women age into and beyond menopausal years, exercise continues to be a key to staying healthy as well as warding off other illnesses and staying mentally sharp. According to Peter Asadourian of Future Fitness Sport Specific Training, no matter what age you are, "the hardest thing to do is to start a training program."

Different anxieties may come into play, but it's important to approach the task at hand with the right mindset. Those in older age groups should not fall victim to the belief that it is too late for them to start a new routine.

"When starting that training program, you need to take some gradual steps," he said. "Set goals for yourself, where you want to be in a few months, etc. Find out what you can do and know your limits. If you are able to do movements with great form and you are breathing comfortably and there is no pain, then you can do it. Just because you are 50 or 60-plus years old does not mean you can't do what a 20-year-old is doing."

It's important when joining a gym to be sure a trainer is providing appropriate guidance and movements are being modified to one's personal abilities, Asadourian said.

"Taking part in a fitness program especially as we get into our 50s and 60s is very beneficial," he said. "We want our bones and muscles to stay strong to avoid injury and other health issues. Exercise is the answer to a lot of everyday health issuses." Its easy to start; your first move is to get up off the chair." **WHL**

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Just *for Women*

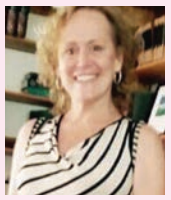
Why I wear PINK

Breast cancer color is personal for many

Compiled by Mara Dresner & Alicia Smith

It's hard to miss the pink during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. Many people go pink just to show support or raise awareness for a good cause. But for others, wearing pink has a much more personal meaning. We spoke to a number of LIFE readers to find out why they wear pink.

Mary Clare Mooney



Mooney was diagnosed in 2011 with breast cancer that was in remission and then in 2015 the cancer moved into her bones.

"I wear pink and participate in Making Strides Against Breast Cancer because we can all learn from each other's experiences. I now live for quality of life and all of my decisions are based on that. I have gained new wisdom that I didn't necessarily want to have but life gives us all challenges and we meet them where we are at that moment and then continue to grow. The support that I have gotten from my doctors, especially Dr. Patricia DeFusco, Dr. Andrew Salner and Dr. Beth Brady has been beyond my expectations. They truly care about their patients and go above and beyond along with their staff. I have the dream team. And Jefferson Radiology is another fabulous organization. My cancer was found with a mammogram and the doctor came in and counseled me that she was concerned and did I want her to call my insurance company and see if they could do an immediate biopsy. She did, they approved it and massive surgery was scheduled within the week. Truly lifesaving.

My hope is that the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk will bring funding that will continue to provide lifesaving mammograms and increase research so that we are all survivors!"

Carmen Feliciano Ragland

"I went for my annual mammogram in January of 2014. Everything seemed normal, so I didn't give my appointment a second thought. However, I realized I didn't receive the results as I usually did the following day. I got the dreaded call, "Your mammogram was abnormal. Please come back to have a diagnostic mammogram" the following Monday. I returned for the diagnostic mammogram and an ultrasound. The ultrasound showed a mass in my right breast that wasn't there the two previous years. I was referred to a surgeon who recommended a biopsy. On Feb. 11, 2014, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was devastated; my world came crashing down. I had my lumpectomy and two lymph nodes tested positive for cancer. The next step was to have a CAT scan immediately to see if the cancer spread to any of my organs. I was blessed that it was contained only to those two lymph nodes. I had a lymph node dissection to remove my level 1 and level 2 lymph nodes (25 total) which all tested negative. My final diagnosis was Stage II A Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC).

The next step of my journey was to meet an oncologist who ordered eight rounds of chemotherapy. Chemotherapy was very grueling and hard on my body. I was unable to work while receiving treatment. After chemo came seven weeks of radiation. My radiation was prolonged due to second-degree burns to my breast, neck and armpit. On Nov. 10, nearly 10 months after my mammogram, I completed my radiation treatments, and was cancer free!

I wear pink ... because I strongly support every woman having access to mammograms and treatment. Early detection is the key to survival, it surely saved my life! ... I am thankful for being an active participant in my health by undergoing routine preventative measures. Too many women and men are being diagnosed with breast cancer at an alarming rate. Be hopeful, but be proactive!"

Sheryl Hoffman Simoni

"I wear pink for many people who are important to me. I began walking Strides [more than] 20 years ago when I worked for SNET and they were a corporate sponsor. It was fun and I walked with friends but didn't put much effort into fundraising. When a dear friend was diagnosed, I began to take fundraising more seriously and when Denise passed away, I raised even more in her memory. My mom was diagnosed with breast cancer and, in 2007, I was diagnosed, but didn't walk that year, returning the next year with a renewed enthusiasm for fundraising. Subsequently, my mom's sister and my sister became breast cancer survivors. I walk in honor and memory of the aunt I lost when I was a toddler, and the many recent breast cancer survivors in my family. There are many organizations that raise funds to battle breast cancer, but the American Cancer Society has funded some of the most important discoveries to date. Money raised by Strides not only helps breast cancer research, but other cancers and I support those efforts. I've made friends through walking Strides and will continue to walk until I can't. WHL

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Just *for Women*

What I tell my friends

Advice from women, for women

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

For many women, relying on the advice of friends or family members can be a key factor in decision making. Those in the medical world are similarly used to providing advice to their friends, family and neighbors about how to stay healthy.

"I would stress preemptive measures," said Dr. Sai Varanasi, a fellow of the American College of Surgeons at Bristol Hospital. "It's good to be proactive."

Varanasi, whose areas of special interest include high-risk groups of breast diseases as well as genetic testing for breast disease, stressed the importance of knowing one's body.

"I tell people to get used to your breasts," she said. "Particularly for young women who have very lumpy breasts, it's good to know how they feel so that if there's something different, you can bring it to the attention of your physician or gynecologist."

In addition to knowing about yourself, Varanasi said it is important to know about your family's past.

"I would tell friends and neighbors more and more now to be aware of their family histories," she said. "We can help them with a genetic background a little bit more than we could a few years ago. The more they can give us, the better."

For those who do have a history of breast cancer in their family, starting mammograms early is key. Varanasi suggested beginning the testing 10 years before the age that a family member had been diagnosed, for example if a family member was diagnosed at 40, mammograms should start at age 30.

Varanasi recognized that many insurance plans do not cover the testing until age 45, but she said that she suggests to friends that they start earlier if possible.

"If it's my friend, I will still tell her, as long as insurance is paying, go for the mammogram starting at 40," she said. "It's better if we can detect it sooner. The smaller the tumor, the less invasive the surgery."

To help prevent these diseases, Varanasi said that she tells her friends to reduce habits that could increase risk.

"Smoking, drinking, these are the factors that increase the risk of breast cancer," she said. "Alcohol, even a drink a day, is supposed to be pushing the envelope for women. I tell my friends make it a weekend thing."

Additionally, Varanasi said that research has shown a direct link between obesity and breast cancer.

To help manage risk, she recommended moderate exercise for 30 minutes per day, five days per week.

In general, Varanasi said that one thing she always stresses to her friends and family is the importance of owning their health.

"I tell my friends that sometimes the patients have to be their own advocates," she said. "The best way is to be current in what's going on out there. ... Sometimes doctors forget to order an ultrasound when a patient has dense breasts," she said. "Out of 50 states, there are 22 where insurance pays for ultrasounds from dense breasts. This is something I would tell my friends and neighbors to be cognizant of." **WHL**

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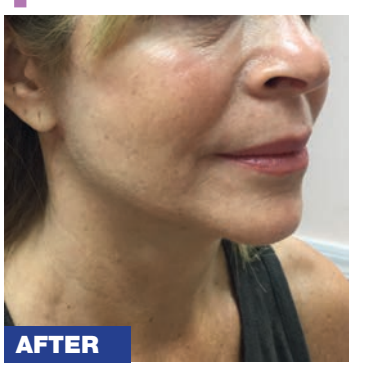

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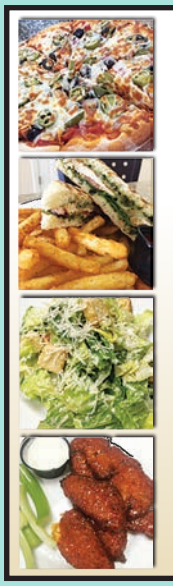

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Ira Nozik Photographers

Best of West Hartford 2016 Awards Show

1. Best of West Hartford award winners gather for a group shot. **2.** NBC Connecticut's Brad Drazen, emcee of the Best of West Hartford awards show, presents an award to Kevin Cowan from Maximum Beverage. **3.** The Best of West Hartford 2016 Awards Show was held at the West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium September 8. **4.** There was much celebrating as Best of West Hartford winners were announced.

The beautiful life

Evelyn Manson-Miller's passion for beauty began as child's play

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

In the lobby of XES Beauty Lounge in West Hartford, Evelyn Manson-Miller relaxed into a plush gray couch, jazz music playing softly from a speaker above her. Beside her lay a notebook, the cover of which read, "Change your thoughts and you'll change the world."

"I didn't go into this business for the money," she said. "It's a passion. I love what I do."

Manson-Miller is the owner and founder of XES Beauty Lounge (pronounced "excess"), which specializes in facials, waxing, manicures and pedicures among other services.

"We do everything but hair," Manson-Miller said.

Prior to moving to its current location on Mayflower Street three years ago, XES was located on Park Road for two years, but the Rocky Hill resident has been in the beauty business more than 25 years.

Born and raised in Avon, Manson-Miller said that her love of beauty and skincare started during her childhood playtime.

"I started out with my dolls because back then there were no dolls that looked like me. There were no black dolls," Manson-Miller said.

Wanting to see more of a reflection of herself, the young girl began mixing foundations from her mother's and aunt's makeup kits and putting them on her dolls.

"That was really the start of my passion," Manson-Miller said.

Evelyn Manson-Miller took her love for the beauty industry and began her own cosmetics line that is selling around the world.

Photo by Lisa Brisson

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As she grew up, she began to further explore her love of beauty and skin care, and studied at the Complections School in Toronto, now the College of Makeup Art & Design. From there, she studyed skincare in Europe, working in both the beauty industry and with dermatologists. It was through this work that she became fascinated with how skin is treated.

"In the makeup industry, we're taught to cover up problems, but I wanted to treat skin issues," she said.

Manson-Miller wanted to work with all types of skin, an idea she was surprised to find was unique.

"A lot of estheticians were not trained on ethnic skin," she said. "I even found that many doctors didn't know how to treat different kinds of skin."

Seeing a need, Manson-Miller began offering seminars.

"I said to myself, 'There's a need in the market for hotels and spas to work with ethnic skin.'"

She took her knowledge of skin care and became involved in both education and manufacturing, formulating skincare solutions for plastic surgeons among other aspects of her creations.

Her extensive knowledge and hard work in the field led Manson-Miller to more unique opportunities working with celebrity clients, such as model Iman, as well as getting the chance to model herself. In her career, she has been a face model for a variety of different products and has walked runways in fashion shows.

"It all goes hand in hand, but a lot of it was being in the right place at the right time," she said, holding one hand up in modest dismissal. "At the end of the day, I like to be behind the scenes."

Manson-Miller took that love for the industry and eight years ago began her own cosmetics line. Having previously worked for beauty giant Yves Saint Laurent, she was inspired by that logo and general aesthetic for XES. Her products are now sold in boutiques around the world, including in Miami where Manson-Miller partially resides.

Six years ago, Manson-Miller decided to open her own storefront business incorporating all of her passions.

"I wanted to create a center where everybody could come and also learn about different skin," she said.

Although she was confident in the business she wanted to open, Manson-Miller said that she found her share of naysayers.

"I opened during the recession and people said I was crazy," she said with a small laugh. "I knew that this was the right time. During the Great Depression, the number one-selling product was Estee Lauder's red lipstick. Even in hard times, especially in hard times, people want something that will make them feel beautiful and confident."

"In Connecticut, women consider a spa a luxury, not a necessity."

–Evelyn Manson-Miller

Another potential obstacle that Manson-Miller found in the opening of her business was the entire culture around spas and beauty in the Northeast. In Miami, she said, facials, nail care and other grooming practices are considered a standard part of life.

"In Connecticut, women consider a spa a luxury, not a necessity," Manson-Miller said. "I had to figure out, 'How will I get them to consider spas an important part of their monthly routine?'"

Additionally, Manson-Miller was concerned about what she considers lax laws for beauty salons in the state as estheticians are not required to be licensed. In her own business, Manson-Miller is far stricter.

"I require them to be licensed and have at least five years experience," she said. "Each of them also goes to training or seminars four times a year."

Manson-Miller said that she believes it is because of her current staff of six that her business has been able to survive and grow over the last six years.

"I say, 'I pay the bills but they own it,' because they're the reason people come back," she said.

Because of this, Manson-Miller said she finds it important to invest in her employees by providing them with opportunities to grow within the field.

"I try to instill in my estheticians how to be business women. They aren't just estheticians," she said. "I try to expose them to a different area of the spa business because otherwise they get burnt out or they get bored."

Alexandra Maldonado, a skin specialist at XES Beauty Lounge, said that working for Manson-Miller has been a more empowering experience than at other similar businesses she has worked in the past.

"I've been in this industry for eight years, and a lot of places don't give you opportunities to learn and advance," she said.

Maldonado said that it is not uncommon for Manson-Miller to jump in and help out with any tasks needed around the salon, from taking care of clients to taking out the trash.

"She gets in the grind with you," Maldonado said. "She has no problem getting her hands dirty."

For Manson-Miller, stepping forward to help others has always been an important part of her life, both professionally and personally. For more than 21 years, she has volunteered with the YMCA both in Hamden and Hartford with their Welfare-to-Work programs.

"I feel that people need an outlet to talk," she said. "I've found that I've been able to help a lot of women with breaking the cycle of abuse. And it's not just women, but men, too.

"I'm not a trained psychotherapist or anything, I just see a need. People who are in these situations, they want to be in an environment where nobody's going to pre-judge them."

Manson-Miller tries to take that same approach of openness into her business, where she said many clients from all walks of life feel comfortable talking about their lives.

"We were the second black family in Avon, so I faced a lot of prejudices growing up. I used to think that we had it so bad, but then I saw other people who are in these very difficult situations," she said. "It doesn't matter what your economic status is, we all need someone to listen."

Looking forward, Manson-Miller said that she is hoping to continue expanding XES as both a beauty lounge and a cosmetics company, and she is happy that people in the area have been giving her business the chance to flourish.

"People are still sometimes shocked that I'm an African-American woman who owns this place in West Hartford," she said. "When they do walk in that door, they can be comfortable that they will get the utmost professional experience. I want them to know that they're getting the best." **WHL**

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Bird's-eye view

A world of possibilities arises with drone photography

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Ron DaSilva sees unlimited possibilities – and this drone pilot sees them from 400 feet in the air.

"I was always into photography and I wanted to go to the next level," the Farmington resident said.

Three years ago, he purchased a drone and began "fooling around with it."

"I was always interested in flight when I was younger. Remote-control airplanes, helicopters and the Estes Rockets were always a big hit," he said.

He adapted the drone to work with a camera and found he was able to get images that previously would have required a helicopter or an airplane.

"It started as a hobby ... just for my personal use," he said of shooting family events, parties and corporate picnics.

Ron DaSilva finds aerial photographs get noticed because the view from above is spectacular. Batterson Park in Farmington and New Britain is seen here.

Photos by Ron DaSilva

A drone offers this bird's-eye view of Avon Old Farms School.

The arial views he was able to get were spectacular.

By adding height and angle to the equation, having a bird's-eye view is almost like an image in 4D, he said.

Almost immediately, "I had a lot of requests from people wanting personal things done," such as someone wanting to sell a house and someone else wanting to check on the progress of a construction project.

DaSilva already had a business consulting firm, Fresh Look Consulting, so he added on Fresh Look Photography.

Golf courses, universities, Realtors, production companies, construction companies, farmers, event planners and inspectors are among DaSilva's clients spread out over Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York.

The most popular use involves real estate – selling magnificent houses, such as those on Deercliff Road in Avon.

"You can't get a breathtaking shot from the ground; you have to shoot them from an aerial perspective," he said.

He shot footage of his sister's new horse farm for a commercial and helped a friend sell a house.

James Micca said he "went overboard" renovating his entire house that's more than a century old. He even redid the landscaping. As he was preparing to sell it, he sought quotes from aerial photographers for pictures to put on the Internet.

"I wanted to get proper photos" before putting it up for sale, he said.

DaSilva was among those who responded. Micca – who knew DaSilva, but not in that capacity – hired him and was impressed with his work.

"I was blown away," he said of the photos of his bungalow and the half-acre of land on which it sits. "I couldn't be happier."

They were so good that Micca decided not to sell after all.

"I said, 'Wait. Look at this place. I love it.'"

He plans to hire DaSilva next year to do a 3D map of a large piece of property for a commercial project.

Those in the construction business are also among DaSilva's top clients.

"They need to see the progress on the job but they can't visit the site every two weeks," he said.

DaSilva and those working for him can provide footage of the project from multiple angles, zooming in closer for more detail.

"I do a lot of charity work. I like to help out in the local Farmington area ... at charity events," he said. They have included the Dream Ride at the Farmington Polo Club and Walk for the Cure. He's also done marathons and enjoys taking scenic videos.

In the Dominican Republic, he was able to get spectacular shots of waterfalls and then follow the river that was otherwise unreachable.

DaSilva owns four drones, each equipped to handle a specific application. He is continuously upgrading and experimenting with new technology, such as an agricultural application, to see if it's something he wants to add to his repertoire.

"It's all experimenting. A lot of experimenting and just keep on working at it," DaSilva said.

Eventually, he hopes to turn the side business into a retirement job.

Drones are programmable. Using an iPad and Google maps, DaSilva said he can fly anywhere. Advanced camera quality gives greater clarity and new drones also have safety features such as obstacle avoidance, "so it's pretty hard to crash into something," he said. "It has a return home feature so the drone returns right to where you launched it."

"It's up to your imagination," DaSilva said of the seemingly unlimited applications. Drones can be used to inspect bridges, solar arrays, cell towers and crops in the field.

He believes it won't be long before Amazon.com will deliver packages using drones. Depending on their size, drones can carry up to about 20 pounds.

"They're starting to run tests already. In England, it's very, very big," he said.

Aerial photography is also becoming a trend for weddings, he said.

While drones have not yet been approved for use by police, those doing forensics want aerial views of crime scenes and often call for advice, DaSilva said.

Drones are being used for search-and-rescue missions. In England, he said, calls for help can result in a drone carrying a defibrillator being sent where it's needed, and provide instruction on how to use it.

More and more movies are being shot with drones, which are replacing helicopters, he said, including James Bond films with high-speed chases.

Drones are classified as an unmanned aircraft and require testing and an FAA certificate to fly.

Aeronautical decision-making, weather, radio communication procedures and emergency procedures are among the topics to be mastered. There are maintenance checks and a preflight inspection procedure.

The same rules and regulations that apply to planes apply to drones, DaSilva said.

The crafts cannot fly higher than 400 feet and cannot operate within five miles of an airport.

"You cannot fly over restricted zones – federal agencies, nuclear power plants, state parks – and you've got to have the aircraft in the line of sight," he said. **WHL**

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New doors to learning open at Charter Oak

Trees and leaves are incorporated into the new building design throughout the school, including on glass at the entrances.

Photos by Abigail Albair

by Abigail Albair
Executive Editor

By mid-September, a third grade class at the new Charter Oak International Academy was learning about peace.

A fifth grade class was in the midst of a science lesson about closed circuits.

First grade sstudents showed off their Chinese language skills and knowledge of the difference between "hello" and "I am here."

So much was happening within the walls of the brand new $45 million building.

The school, which is a "diversity school," for which the town is eligible to receive 80 percent reimbursement from the state, is the first new elementary school in town since 1950.

The original structure, built in 1930 for less than $300,000, was named after the famous oak tree in Hartford.

Trees and leaves are incorporated into the new building design throughout the school, both on glass at the entrances and in elements such as the lighting in the library/media center.

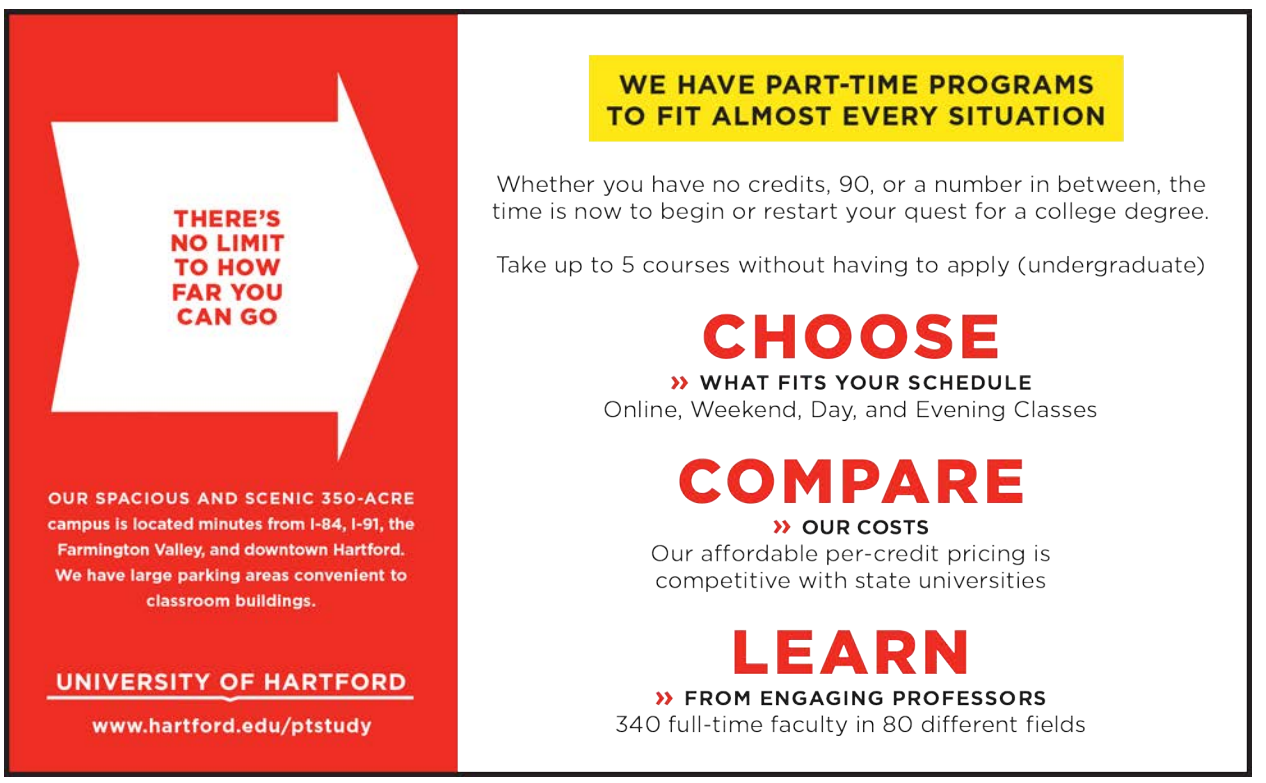
"Green" is a theme throughout the school, both in terms of the color that adorns many interior walls and energy efficiency.

The building – round in design – uses geothermal heat pumps, solar panels and LED lighting.

"Sustainability is going to be a key concept in our building," Principal Juan Melian said during a tour in August before the students returned, noting that organics recycling will be integrated into student practices. "We can tie that in very well with our [International Baccalaureate] units. We look to topics that are internationally relevant and the environment is one of them."

On an early September afternoon, fourth grade students were working with Kristen Sanderson, the school's IB coordinator, in the inquiry room to prepare for a video announcement to educate peers on the benefits of composting.

Students record daily videos, and the school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EDUCATION

Above, top: Jing-Jing Vu teaches Chinese to a group of first grade students. Above, bottom: Michael Vita works with a music student in the school auditorium.

The school includes several common areas meant to foster collaborative learning opportunities.

boasts its own green screen for use on such projects.

The classrooms are truly state-of-the-art, Melian said, explaining that there are two technology rooms and every fifth grade classroom is equipped with a mediascape.

All classrooms include LED smartboards, but the mediascapes are an extra element that will benefit the school's oldest students during work on their capstone projects, in addition to other regular use. Any device can connect to the mediascape so work can be displayed on a smartboard for group discussion.

Space in the library, an inquiry room and other spaces throughout

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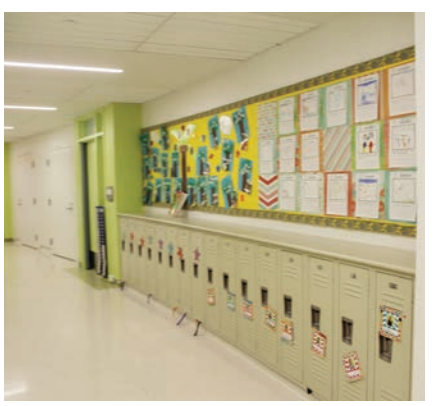
EDUCATION

The library incorporates state-of-the-art technology and warm decor. It abuts the school's center courtyard.



Above, top: social worker Chuck Hummel teaches third-graders a lesson about peace. Above, bottom: the hallways are now filled with student work.

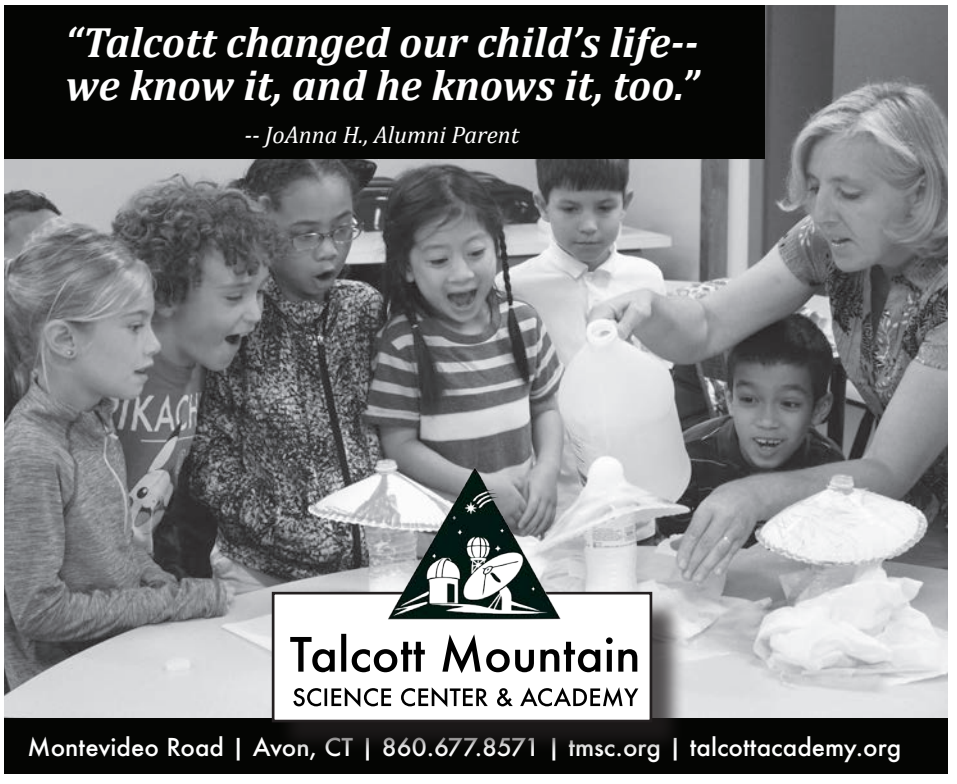
the school also include smartboards and mediascapes. The ratio is nearly one-to-one for students and devices.

The school began the year with 452 students. Maximum capacity is 560 students, a number Melian is confident will be reached within the next few years.

Pre-k classrooms are already filled to the 80-student capacity.

There are four kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, three second, third and fourth grade classrooms and two fifth grade classrooms.

"What is amazing is we had no question that we were going to complete the five pre-k classes, but then we were able to add a fourth in kin-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EDUCATION

Above, left: a preschool classroom. Above, right: The school's auditorium connects to an amphitheater in the courtyard through a retractable glass wall. The outdoor space can be used in tandem with the auditorium stage, or as a learning and collaborative area.

dergarten and a fourth in first grade and that was awesome because these are students who have other options," Melian said.

The staff was busy in the weeks prior to the school year settling into the new space.

Three common areas inside the building will allow for instructional collaboration as well as collaboration for students who can gather in such spaces to read together or work in small groups.

Nora Brown had already used the center courtyard of the round building for team building with her third-grade class. The courtyard is separated from the auditorium stage by a retractable glass wall, which allows the space to be converted into an outdoor amphitheater.

> **"The kids are really enjoying the space. We're still figuring out the best way to use all that we have."**
>
> **–Nora Brown**

"It's a great way for us to change the scenery," Brown said of the courtyard and its educational opportunities. "The kids are really enjoying the space. We're still figuring out the best way to use all that we have."

The halls are now filled with the sounds of learning as the school community adjusts to its new environment. Melian said the focus for the staff will continue to be developing methods to best use the new building and all its capabilities for 21st century learning. **WHL**

Northwest Catholic High School '16 Alumni are attending the following schools this fall:
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Charleston Fordham U ege Colgate University
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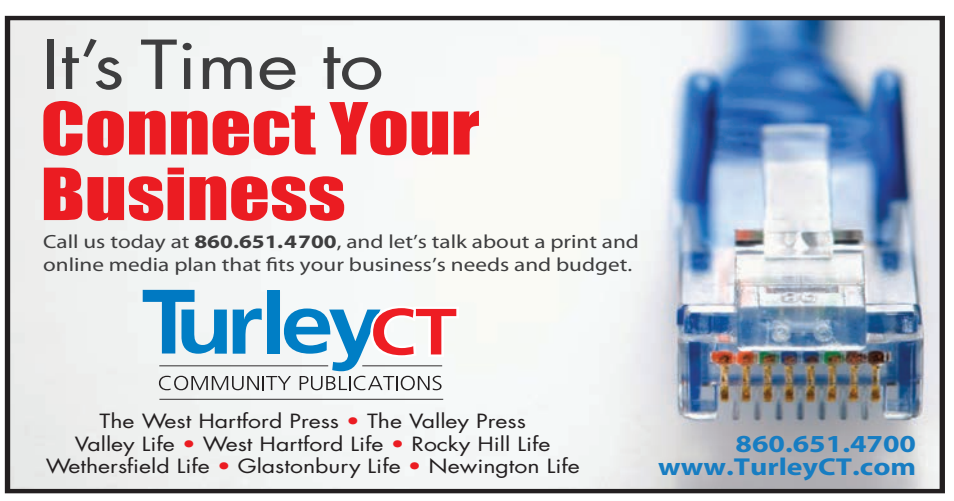
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News notes

1. Bike West Hartford, Inc., a non-profit organization that advocates for bicycle-friendly policies and programs in town, organized the town's inaugural "Center Streets" event August 28 during which traffic was closed on Farmington Avenue, South Main Street, Memorial Road Extension and LaSalle Road to form a loop around the central business district. According to organizers, the purpose of the event was to demonstrate the support that exists in town for bicycling as a transportation and recreational option in addition to creating a safe and fun space for the community.

The West Hartford Libraries conducted a survey for residents as part of their development of long-range planning. Library Director Martha Church said the survey was created because doing a community assessment is part of any kind of strategic planning process. The brief survey asked respondents questions such as which library branches they have visited in the past six months, what hours they would like the libraries to be open, what kinds of programs they would like to attend and what languages they would like to see in both materials and programming.

Owen Eagan was selected as the Democratic candidate for probate judge and the presumptive winner of the uncontested race for the November election during an August primary. A little more than 3,000 votes were cast of the 18,000 registered democrats in town during the primary on August 9. Although Eagan was endorsed by the West Hartford Democratic Town Committee in May, during the following weeks, attorney Michael Croll successfully submitted a petition to the Town Clerk's office to force the primary. Eagan garnered a total of 1,929 votes while Croll received 1,111.

The town's Leisure Services Department unveiled a new logo to reflect the vibrancy of its offerings and reengage residents with the local parks system. The department handles Parks and Recreation activities, managing a range of facilities, producing programs for participants of all ages and abilities and overseeing special community events. The new logo has been several years in the making, and signs featuring the new design will be installed on an as-needed basis.

While the search continues for a place to locate a permanent dog park in town, a new plan has unfolded to create temporary dog-friendly spots on a regular basis. On Monday, Aug. 22, the West Hartford Dog Park Coalition handed out flyers announcing the launch of "pop up dog parks" – roving events during which a space within a town park will be designated as dog-friendly on day a month during specific hours. The town intends to release a schedule of where the pop up dog parks will be located each month.

A public hearing is to be held on a proposed ordinance change that would make way for a new development in West Hartford Center. The application to amend town ordinances to allow an increase in floor area ratio in the town's Central Business zone was filed by Lexham Private Investors, LLC, the owner of several existing properties in the center. The change would allow, as part of a Special Development District application, an increase in a building's maximum FAR from 1.25 to 1.5 if the floors above the ground floor are used for residential purposes, provided the council finds adequate parking, street capacity and bicycle and pedestrian amenities exist as part of the proposal. A hearing on the ordinance change was set for, as of press time, Sept. 27. An application by Lexham for a new mixed-use development is expected to be filed at a later date pending the Town Council ruling on the ordinance change.

West Hartford Police Chief Tracey Gove issued an open letter to the community outlining the West Hartford Police Department's response to recent national events regarding the use of police force. He outlined seven areas relevant to the topic on which the department has focused, including hiring, background, mission statement, use of force, training, community outreach and citizen complaints. "I believe that better understanding by everyone is an important element in preventing tragic incidents," he said. "Communication is critical in ensuring a positive partnership with our community." The department subsequently held a community classroom event on police use of force, a course which department officials hope can become a recurring offering on a variety of topics.

The Town Council approved an application at the end of July for a new office building near the Bishops Corner shopping center. The application to change the zone of the parcel from R-13 residential to residence-office and then to a Special Development District was approved in a unanimous vote. Julianne Roth, the manager of 312 North Main Street LLC, entered a contract to purchase the property and a completed building to be constructed by ZP Group to house her business, Companions for Living, LLC, a home care agency that specializes in memory care, Alzheimer's care and care of persons with other dementias.

The Town Council approved changes to the administrative approval process for Special Development Districts at its July 26 meeting. The amendments were proposed to make the process less cumbersome by allowing the town planner more latitude in making minor SDD changes. According to a document outlining the ordinance amendment, "the ordinance establishing the SDD process was first established at a time when development projects in West Hartford were far less complex than is now the case."

In late July, the Town Council extended its moratorium on the approval of ground-mounted and pole-mounted solar energy systems in residential zones until the end of October. A solar installation that exceeds the size anticipated when an alternative energy ordinance was previously adopted prompted the Town Council to declare a six-month moratorium in January. The administration intends to propose further restrictions on ground-mounted and pole-mounted solar energy systems to "balance the interested of all property owners within the town."

Town Manager Ron Van Winkle received a 2 percent pay raise retroactively beginning July 1 or this year from $156,832 to $160,000. Although the topic of wage increases for town employees has, in the past, been a point of contention dividing council democrats and republicans, the resolution to increase the manager's salary was brought forth by all council members and approved unanimously Tuesday, July 26. **WHL**

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If interested in adopting him, call AFOC 860-827-0381.

Bruce Wayne

Bruce Wayne is a 2-year-old, male Cattle dog mix. He was found roaming loose in town, wearing a Batman collar, but was never claimed by an owner. Slightly aloof at first, Bruce Wayne has been warming up to staff at the pound. He knows sit; he is working on down, come and drop, and is being trained to walk on a gentle leader. He can be stubborn and should go to a home that has dog experience and children ages 10 or older. If there is another dog, it's probably best it be female, but they'd have to meet. **WHL**

To make an appointment to visit Bruce, send an email to animalcontrol@westhartfordct.gov or call 860-570-8818.

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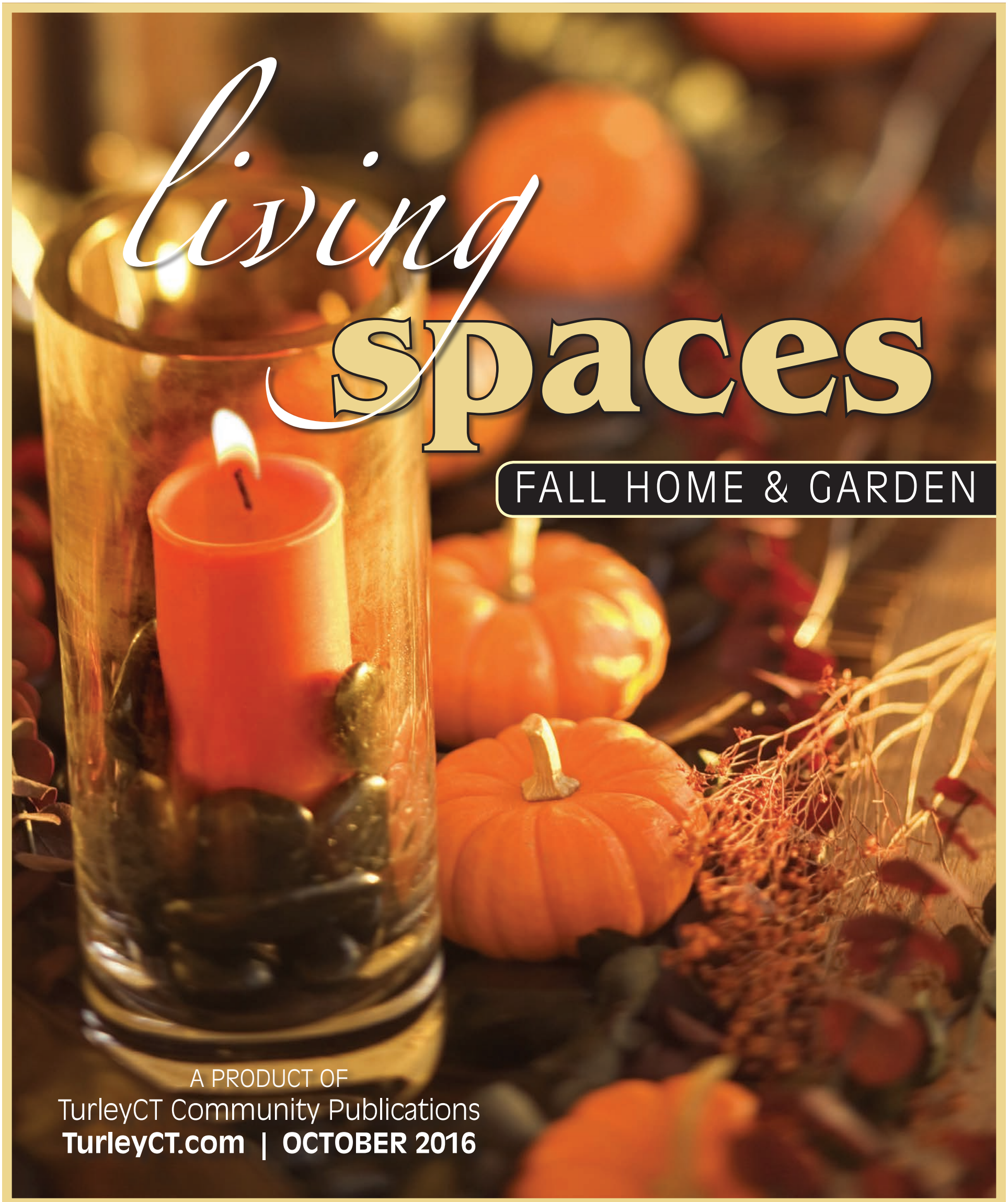
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Fall in love with Decorating

How to give your home an autumnal feeling

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

As the hot days of summer pass behind, add a little warmth to the home.

Carolyn Leining-Lombardi of CT Interior Solutions, in Newington, just started changing some of her decor for fall, she said in a phone call Sept. 13. The tricks she used are ones that anyone can duplicate.

"The coloring all changed," she said. "It's going from very, very light lemony, that cooler feeling for the summer, to warmer tones."

For instance, in place of lemons in a glass vase on the sideboard in her dining room, she put apples and pears.

Across from the vase of apples and pears, she had another vase that she filled with dark red hydrangeas. Next to that, she placed a white candle designed with apples embedded in the wax in a Tuscan pillar candle holder, which she changed from a holder with a summer design and a cool colored candle.

"It kind of pulls it all together," she said of the candle and holder.

On her dining room table, she

A decorative tray of seasonal elements can dress up a dining room table.

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put a decorative tray with light green artichokes, apples and pears, then for fun, in the very center of the tray, she added an old fashioned bicycle made of iron with a bright red seat to pull it all together, she said.

"Now the coloring of that entire kitchen area has changed," Leining-Lombardi said.

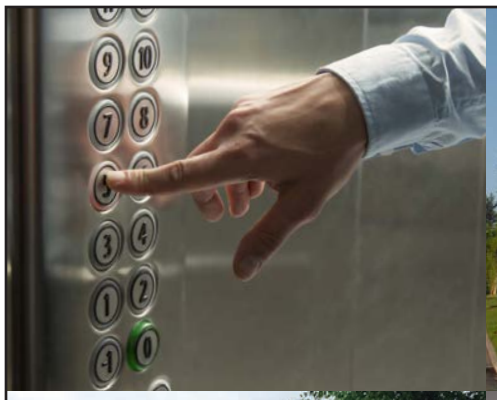
Next, she made some changes to the living room,

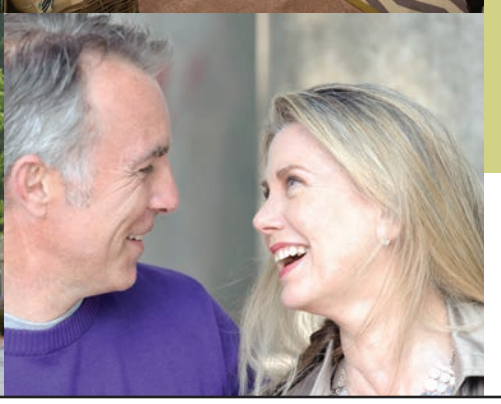
On her coffee table, she keeps an arrangement of artificial flowers in a blue and white vase. Over the summer the flowers were "white, light and flowy," she said.

For fall, she kept the white ones and added pieces of greenery with purple beads and red roselike flowers.

She is also planning to change her throw pillows to include some warmer fall shades.

Putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders all bring in warmer autumn shades.





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"It's tiny little things that are so small," she said of how to make season to season alterations.

Simple ideas to add a nice autumn look that Leining-Lombardi suggested others try included putting leaves in a lantern with a candle, swapping out decorative plates for ones sporting fall colors and designs and changing pot holders to sets in

Outside the home, wreaths and the usual mums and pumpkins will do the trick.

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warmer autumn shades.

"It doesn't mean that you have to go out and buy all new pieces of furniture," she said.

"Smaller pieces can be reinvented to reflect the season.

In her home, she has a place holder hanging on the wall, into which she slides a decorative plate, one that she changes with the time of year.

"That's so easy to change, that could be changed in a blink," Leining-Lombardi said. "And they could be changed at Christmas to Christmas plates that you like."

In summer, Leining-Lombardi removes pads from her chairs but in the winter, she puts them back on.

"Just the idea of material, as opposed to wood itself, will warm it up as well," she said.

In her bedroom, she was planning to retain the white core and change the pillows to shades of gold and blue.

"Blue, white and gold looks very striking together," she said. "Right now it looks very summery, which is what I wanted."

As she did in other rooms, she was also going to swap out candles and candle holders for darker shades. She also planned to change the lamp in the bedroom.

"It's very little, but it just changes the look," she said.

As the temperatures drop, Leining-Lombardi said she may also add a fur throw and pillow.

"It's fur, it's warm, but that'll be more in late October when it's starting to get chilly

A few shifts outdoors add to the overall look, Leining-Lombardi added. She recommended the usual mums and adding lanterns with tea lights.

"They go on at the end of the day so that creates warmth as well," she said.

An ornamental plant to incorporate in the fall is a flowering cabbage.

"It looks like a head cabbage," she said. "Pretty greenery adds a nice touch and can even be brought into a home and put in a pot."

Of course, at this time of year, there are pumpkins galore and they're not all orange.

"There are all kinds of pumpkins out there that you can buy," she said. "I'm not particularly fond of orange in my home, but white, the ones that look like vines."

She even had ideas for those whose homes are decorated in colors that generally clash with fall tones. For example, in a home with a lot of pink, add some gray to bring in fall.

"Pink and gray can be worked well together," she said, "different shades of gray that would warm it up."

Gail Bantle, design consultant from RLF Home in Hartford, recommends adding decorative pillows in fall colors and changing window treatments and bedding.

In summer use brighter colors.

"In autumn, in winter, you want the darker, warmer tones because you want it to be cozy," Bantle said.

Table linens, runners and placemats in the right shades will also bring that warm feeling needed for fall, she said.

Some homeowners change the rugs in front of the sink or change knick-knacks throughout the house based on the time of year or holiday.

Bantle also adds flowers with oranges, browns and rust colors and got rid of the geraniums she had in vases during the summer.

"Go to a craft store and pick up some really fun things and place them throughout," she said. "Easy, inexpensive ways to add a fall feeling." **WHL**

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To find this eclectic mix along with other items, visit Blue Moon Artisans, on the second floor of the Westfarms mall near Macy's. For more information call 860-313-0303.

Bracelets for a good cause

Fashion meets good deeds with the newest "Water Lokai" bracelet. This bracelet just launched in mid-August and The Paper Store has a large inventory of this new release. The bracelets contain water from Mt. Everest, in one white bead and mud from the Dead Sea in a lone black bead indicating a balanced life. The remaining beads reflect the element of water. This Water Lokai is limited edition and is available in-store only. Ten percent of the net profits go to the charity, water wells in Ethiopia. Find the Water Lokai bracelet at The Paper Store, along with the Classic Lokai, a clear bracelet with the same two balanced elements. The Paper Store is located at 6 Sims Rd., and can be reached at 860-969-3777 or online at thepaperstore.com. WHL

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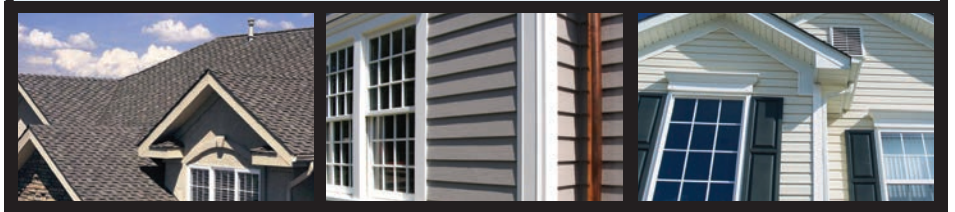

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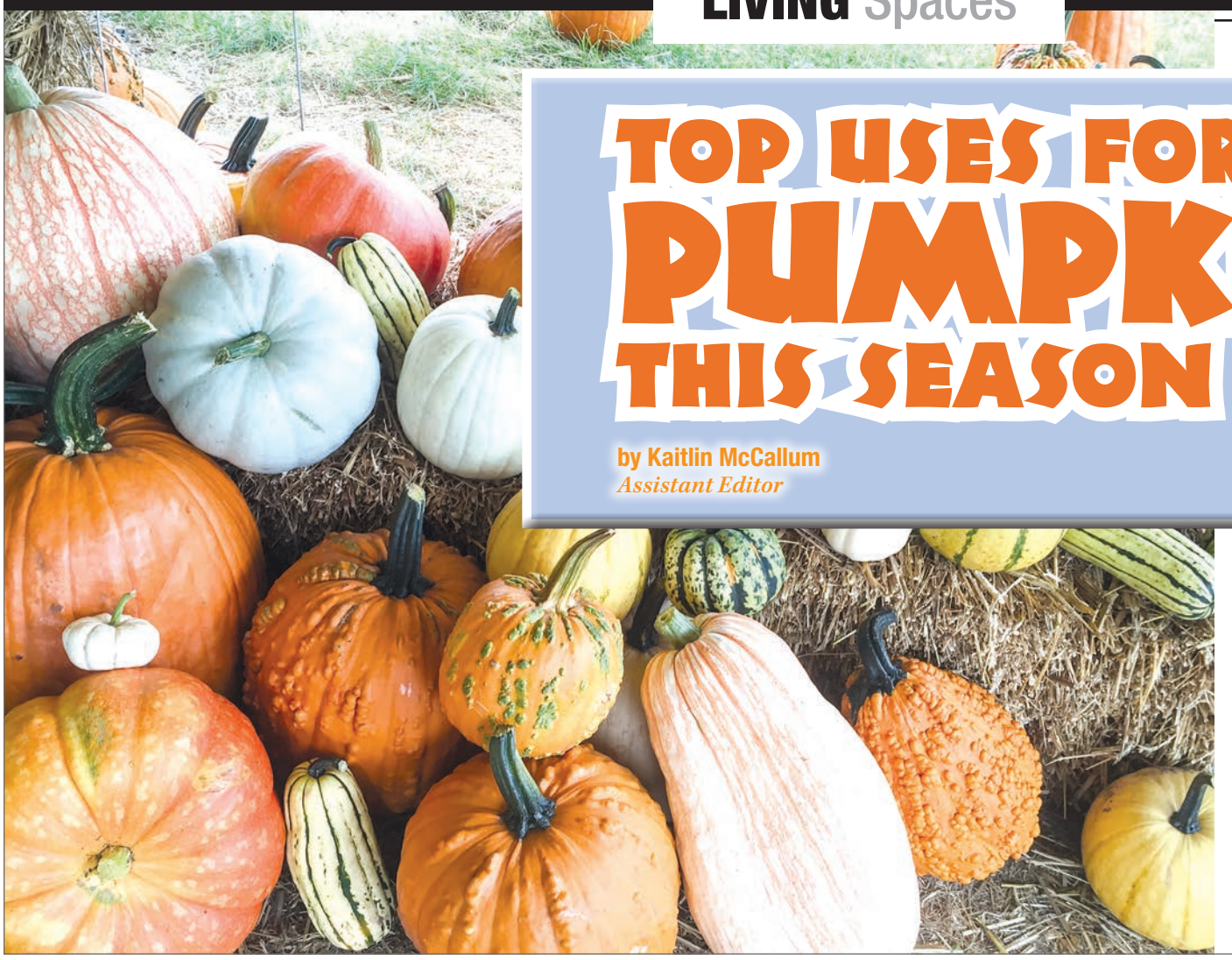

TOP USES FOR PUMPKINS THIS SEASON

by Kaitlin McCallum
Assistant Editor

October in Connecticut means lovely crisp air, sweaters, apples and beautiful orange pumpkins on every doorstep. And while carving a traditional jagged-tooth grin and popping a candle inside is an acceptable Halloween option, there's so much more potential locked in the ubiquitous pumpkin. Here are eight of your best options.

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LIVING Spaces

Decorate

Pumpkins are beautiful and, paired with mums, make an obvious fall decoration.

Lisa Gilbert of the Gilbert Farm in Rocky Hill says most people just place them on their doorstep as a welcoming celebration of fall. Beyond that, they can also be paired with hay bales and cornstalks, Gilbert said.

"Sometimes I've seen people use gourds and a mixture of pumpkins and they layer them to get a piled effect for a fall display," she said.

Gilbert said many customers line the front steps of their homes with different sizes and colors of

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pumpkins, taking advantage of the many varieties now offered.

"Something new that's been all the rage in Pennsylvania and New England is a stackable pumpkin. You take three different sizes or colored pumpkins and stack them on top of each other. You use a flatter pumpkin for the bottom and the top one is a rounder one," Gilbert said. "That's something new that's been trending the past few years or so but has not yet caught on around here."

And for those houses that have crown molding around the door, tiny sugar pumpkins make a cute decoration, Gilbert said.

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Use as a serving vessel

Decorating with pumpkins can extend to your dinner table. Kathi Martin, owner of Brown's Harvest in Windsor, recommends using them as a serving vessel.

"We will hollow out a bigger pumpkin and use it as a vessel to serve chili or pumpkin soup or set in a liner and do apple cider," Martin said.

"There's no harm in not putting in a liner, but any kind of jar or container that would fit inside would be fine."

You could also use smaller pumpkins as individual serving bowls for a dinner party.

Make a face mask

Once you've hollowed out your pumpkins, you can add their insides to your beauty routine.

"On the beauty end of it, you can do a pumpkin peel mask," Martin said. "They're loaded with enzymes and Vitamins A, C and E."

After mixing the pureed contents of one small pumpkin with a few teaspoons of honey and a few teaspoons of milk, apply gently, let sit 20 minutes, wash off and follow with a moisturizer.

Roast the seeds

"It's a very healthy fruit for you," Martin said. "You can use the seeds. Toast them or roast them and between the seeds and the flesh, you're getting lots of different vitamins."

"It's such a beautiful fruit that comes in so many different colors and sizes and people love decorating with them. In terms of eating pumpkins, there are so many uses beside seeds and pureeing it for soup, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread. The uses are endless really."

– Kathi Martin, owner of Brown's Harvest

To roast the seeds, toss with some oil of your choice, sprinkle with sea salt and roast in the oven in a single layer for 45 minutes at 300 degrees.

Bake the fruit

Casseroles, pies, breads and soups are all delicious made with fresh pumpkin, but at Brown's Harvest, Mrs. Brown's pumpkin praline pie is the family's favorite recipe.

"My mom has a recipe for the best pie ever," Martin said. "If you are willing to do a few steps, it is the best. She'll make it a few times and we'll save her a few sugar pumpkins for her to make it at Christmastime."

Find the recipe at www.brownsharvest.com under the recipe's tab.

Carve them

Carving jack-o-lanterns is a popular tradition, with many people opting for electric or battery-operated candles to reduce fire hazard.

To keep them looking nice, Martin recommends waiting to carve pumpkins until a day or two before Halloween.

"Some people use vegetable oil or some kind of protectant to preserve it or soak it overnight in water if it starts to shrivel," Martin said. "You could also put a tiny bit of bleach to keep the bugs away."

Use as a planter

Gilbert said recently she has seen people hollowing out pumpkins to use as planters, too.

Seasonal flowers, like mums, which are available at most local farms now, are a good choice to plant in pumpkins for a fall look.

To plant, simply cut a large hole at the top, hollow out the insides and poke a few drainage holes in the bottom.

Flowers can be planted directly into the pumpkin, filled, two-thirds full with dirt, or just slide a pot into the pumpkin.

The pumpkin itself can

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eventually be planted into the ground, if desired.

Feed the wildlife

When you're absolutely through with your pumpkins, carved or not, you can pass them on as a snack for wildlife.

On the farm, extra pumpkins are fed to the livestock, but backyard animals are just as happy to eat them.

"Deer love pumpkins. If there are any pumpkins left out in the field, the wildlife will definitely go in and eat them. It's a good source of protein, so if people get done decorating with them they can put them out in their yards. They could dispose of them in their compost pile and between what the wildlife does and Mother Nature does, they will definitely break down," Gilbert said.

"It's such a beautiful fruit that comes in so many different colors and sizes, and people love decorating with them," Martin said. "It's just prolonging the colors of the season into fall. In terms of eating pumpkins, there are so many uses beside seeds and pureeing it for soup, pumpkin butter, pumpkin bread. The uses are endless, really." **WHL**

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How to tend to an indoor herb garden

Fresh herbs and recently picked ingredients can add flavor to any meal. A home chef can even improve the flavor of store-bought or prepared foods with an herb garnish that can transform otherwise bland dishes into something you'll want to eat again and again.

Harvesting fresh herbs is easy for homeowners who have gardens right in their backyards. However, everyone does not have a backyard, and even those who do might find their gardens threatened by changing seasons or unwanted critters. When gardens are moved indoors, the bounty of fresh ingredients continues no matter the date on the calendar.

Herb gardens are perhaps some of the easiest gardens to cultivate indoors because they don't require large pots or much space. The plants themselves are relatively compact, and it only takes a pinch of herbs to give a meal some extra flavor.

When growing herbs indoors, your indoor growing area must have adequate light to simulate the longer days of summer; otherwise, the plants may go dormant. It's ideal to have a southern exposure on the herbs, with at least eight hours of sunlight per day. If you do not live in a particularly sunny locale, consider supplementing the plants with grow lights, which will provide the full spectrum of light the plants need to thrive.

Indoor air can become too dry for herbs, so you will need to compensate by providing humidity. While there may be added humidity in a kitchen greenhouse window, it still may not be enough to keep the plants healthy. Think about misting the plants daily to create some extra humidity, or place herb pots on top of a water-filled tray with pebbles so the evaporating water will add moisture without making the roots soggy.

Insects are another threat to indoor gardens because there is no cold weather to inhibit the hatching of insect eggs. Soil from outdoors may be more susceptible to insects that are already living in the dirt. Instead of soil from outside, use packaged soil or a nonsoil alternative that will hold moisture without the added risk of bugs. If small insects appear, use a mist of soapy water to kill the bugs without harming the plants or making the herbs unfit for eating.

Group herbs together according to their watering needs to make maintenance that much easier.

New sprouts generally need more water than established plants.

Prune the herbs as needed for recipes. If the herbs experience a growth spurt, trim some of the plants and freeze the herbs for later use.

Many indoor herb gardeners begin by growing parsley, chives, oregano, and basil, but you can experiment with just about any herb. **WHL**

A sunny location is necessary when cultivating an indoor herb garden.

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The final trim

Getting your lawn ready for winter

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

Water, water nowhere and not a drop for the grass to drink.

The dry summer is taking a toll on lawns, according to speakers who chimed in about getting the lawn ready for winter.

Estimates running around suggest that there has been between a six to eight inch rain deficit these past few months, said David Burr of DW Burr in Simsbury. That lack of hydration is leaving lawns brown and dormant or completely dead.

"There's a lot of things, problems this year because of the draught we're in. A lot of lawns have really taken a beating this summer," he said. "One thing we need to do is to have Mother Nature help us out a little bit with some rain."

Barring that, folks should water their lawns regularly if possible and consider irrigation systems, though he added that in some towns, including Simsbury, people rely on wells and may need to conserve water for other purposes.

Mark Pierson of Mark's Landscaping in West Hartford said much the same thing about the difficulty folks are having because their lawns are so dry.

"Honestly, water [the lawn], he said. "It's a good idea to get some water in there, in the root system for the fall."

Pierson and Burr both suggested aerating the soil before winter.

Aerating machines are available for rent at rental stores for about $65 per day, or $40 to $50 for a half day, Pierson said.

Aerating is the first step to take in the fall, Burr said. This year it's even more important than usual because aeration helps lawns become draught tolerant by deepening the root system.

"It's always a good idea to aerate," he said. "That opens up the soil, gets the seeds and moisture down deep."

Burr used lawns at golf courses or places where they are regularly watered to explain how aerating can help. Those lawns get used to the ready access to hydration, he said.

"The lawns get lazy because the roots don't have to drive down deep [to get water]," he said.

Aerating deepens the roots, putting them nearer underground water supplies so the lawn is less likely to get too dry during a draught.

The next step is seeding and fertilizing.

Fall is a good time to overseed or drop seeds on the already grown grass, Burr said. Even in periods of draught, a sprinkling of wetness tends to dot the grass in the morning.

"The advantage to doing this seeding in the fall is that you get a lot of these mornings where there's heavy dew," Burr said.

He recommends fertilizing with a slow acting fertilizer and seeding at the same time. Do that in early fall, he said.

Water if possible, either the natural way with rain, or using the hose or sprinklers.

Then, around Thanksgiving, add another shot of fertilizer.

"Really, with this past summer, it's going to be about reseeding and getting some water," Burr said. **WHL**

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Writer's block

Why we say no

by Lynn Woike
Editor

With increasing frequency, sources we turn to for stories are asking to read an article before it goes to press. To agree to this goes against the journalist ethics I was taught to follow. To do so is to turn over control of editorial content.

Letting someone change quotes or otherwise edit information to suit themselves does not serve readers. It would turn our pages into propaganda. Our credibility would be compromised.

It is our responsibility as a newsmagazine to provide our readers with accurate information. You can count on us to be fair and honest. Each of us takes pride in doing so. Sometimes interviews are taped. Other times we can slow people down so that we can type or write every word in what intuition tells us will be an important passage.

As community publications, we are proud of the towns we serve. We want to showcase people, events and organizations. With the more newsy items covered by our sister paper, the West Hartford Press, here we have feature stories. We don't do investigative reporting, although we do research. We are not trying to dig up dirt or embarrass people, but we will state facts.

You'll find us willing to work with you. Details that are not directly relevant to the story do not need to be included. If you don't want readers to know the names and ages of your children, and they are not part of the story, then we don't need to include them. The same can go for other ancillary information such as health issues, relationship status or your decorating choices – unless, of course, the story is about fitness, dating or interior design.

Interviewees can request go on and off the record. [It's worth noting this technicality: the interviewer must agree to it.] I have no problem with someone telling me, "Wait, I want to go back and change 'kids' to 'students'" or "That sounded inarticulate, let me explain it this way."

If the next day you think of something you should have said, or wish you didn't say, call the reporter. There's a good chance it can be worked out. Likewise, the reporter with points to clarify or additional questions will call you back.

There's a trust factor involved. We trust sources to tell us the truth – we don't employ an army of fact checkers – and sources trust us to tell the story correctly.

The ability to approve quotes has been demanded by political campaigns and other public relations firms trying to control the message, and major news outlets such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Huffington Post, Reuters and Vanity Fair allow it.

We will also agree to let sources review their direct quotes for accuracy.

Still, they often come back sanitized of anything off the cuff, replaced with carefully crafted, polished, politically correct language. It can become dull as the spontaneity and genuineness are written over.

The entire meaning can also get changed in the editing process, and that distorts the truth. It's better to include in the story a sentence describing there's been a change of heart.

People have also demanded to see entire stories as a condition for being interviewed. The answer to that is always no. There have been interviews we have not conducted and stories we have not written because of such demands.

As more and more news outlets are controlled by those who want to control the news, the press has lost its ability to be a watchdog. Some broadcast stations come across as attack dogs, others like lapdogs – with both offering slanted views.

But we are not some corporate giant with special interests at stake. We're a family-owned small business with a passion for community news.

We are an experienced staff and we pride ourselves on publishing local stories that are accurate, interesting and meaningful. Last month, we published 73 byline stories in our six monthly papers. While all newspapers must print corrections or clarifications, we pride ourselves on the fact that this is not something we need to do frequently.

Each article is edited by at least one editor to spot inconsistencies, errors and red flags.

Whenever someone has said they want to check over the story first, it's usually because they've been burned by the press in the past – it's never been us that offended them. And I want to believe it never will be.

Know that if you are a source for one of our stories, you can work with the writer, then relax in the knowledge that a professional has your back. **WHL**

Letters

St. Peter Claver Church

Photo by Lynn Woike

To the Editor:
As one of the original founding families of St. Peter Claver Parish, I enjoyed reading your story.

As a family, we had belonged to St. Thomas the Apostle church for about a year before "St. Braeburn" became our "church" for Sunday Mass, though I remember well Lenten services at the rectory on the corner of Farmington Avenue and Lemay Street during the week. One room had been designated as a chapel for weekday Mass. The auditorium and cafeteria were utilized on Sunday for Mass and those of us with small children (we had three at the time) chose to stand in the cafeteria where the young children could walk around without being confined to an auditorium seat.

As society changed, our parish also changed. Years ago we had an active Women's Guild that has since disbanded, but women are now seen on the altar as lectors and young girls serve as altar girls.

What has remained the same is the faithfulness of the parishioners and their willingness to help the less fortunate. We share a common belief and have been blessed to have enthusiastic clergy to lead our congregation.

I am most proud of our concern for the poor. St. Peter Claver generously contributes to the Archbishop's Appeal.

We parishioners once filled bags of food at Thanksgiving but now donate money to Foodshare as it can more efficiently purchase and distribute food where needed. In June, we filled bags with food for the West Hartford Food Pantry to assure children would be able to eat during the summer after the school lunch program had ended with the school year.

During the six weeks of Lent, the Corporeal Acts of Mercy collect needed supplies. One week it may be underwear and socks for a men's shelter; another week, it's a collection for body lotions, razors and toiletries for those with HIV/AIDS; or disposable diapers and juices for children.

The beginning of Advent finds a Christmas tree with tags indicating what an organization needs. It could be toys for a special age group or pajamas for the teen mothers and their children at St. Agnes Home.

The generosity of our parish community is never more evident than at Christmas when we fill some 150 baskets of food for local families. This ministry began in the 1970s and continues to this day.

I can hardly believe it's been 50 years.

–Patricia Keresey

To the Editor:
I so enjoyed your piece on St. Peter Claver. It was a large part of my childhood.

In the late spring and summer, my grandmother and I walked to mass nearly every Sunday. We'd go from our house on LeMay Street, passed the old rectory (or as the neighborhood kids called it, "Father Shagrue's House"), across Farmington Avenue and then down beautiful Pleasant Street.

I can still feel the sun on my face, shining through the breaks in the trees, and smell the lilacs in bloom. Best of all, I can still hear my grandmother's cheerful, calming voice and feel her hand in mine as we strolled along in our "church clothes," having a chat.

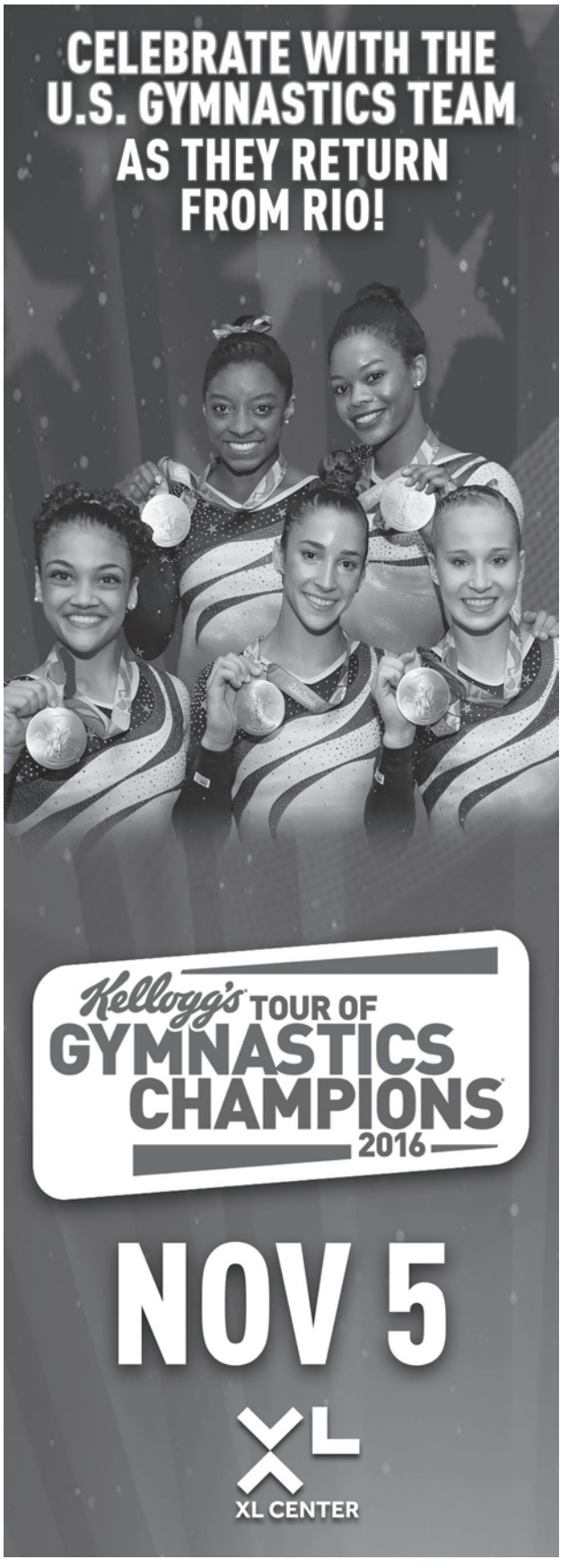
My brothers were altar boys, which absolutely floored me because they were the worst mischief makers, and they'd look so angelic on those Sunday mornings – or sometimes Saturdays at 5.

Our family, friends and neighbors celebrated many sacraments, weddings and funerals at St. Peter Claver over the years. I even taught CCD for a time.

So, in the spirit of historical accuracy, I felt compelled to write and let you know that the parish center and classrooms were actually part of an addition designed and added in the 1990s, along with the bell tower. It may only be a minor error, but since we're talking history, I thought it wise to note it.

Thank you again for the article. It was a sweet little trip down Memory Lane, or dare I say, Pleasant Street, for this lifelong West Hartford resident.

–Laurie Elliott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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

5 years ago, this month!

Do you remember where you were the last weekend of October, 2011? I was actually on the Cape for Halloween experiencing a cold and windy rain, unlike everyone else back in Connecticut.

It was not until the drive back that I realized the magnitude of what transpired.

2011 was quite the year for extreme weather here in Southern New England. In June, there was the long track tornado (EF3) that traveled just north of our border in Massachusetts. Then, roughly 2 months after Irene hit the region, it was October 29th and 30th that "Snowtober" or "Storm Alfred" wreaked havoc on the Nutmeg State (keep in mind naming snowstorms is a WFSB tradition that dates back to 1971 and the days of the Travelers Weather Service). It was heavy, wet snow in tandem with fully leafed trees that led to widespread damage and the state's worst power outage with approximately 880,000 customers being impacted (surpassing Irene's ~800,000 outages). Halloween festivities for many had to be postponed or cancelled.

For comparison -- Sandy, exactly one year later to the day, only led to ~650,000 outages.

The totals from Alfred across Connecticut ranged from just a couple of inches, to two feet! Officially at Bradley International, 12.3" was received, setting a daily snow record and the all-time record for biggest snowstorm in the month of October. **WHL**

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Don Sagarino 860.836.8711

WEST HARTFORD – Incredibly spacious colonial. 5BR including master suite& 4 full BA. Family room + year round sunroom, eat-in-kitchen with granite, private pool & patio! 3 + car garage. $539,500

Sherry Rifkin 860.985.6053

WEST HARTFORD – NEW PRICE! This gracious 1920's colonial in the Morley school district. The sunny, EIK has crisp white cabinets and a new stainless fridge and gas range. $425,000

Kara Flanagan 860.796.5532

REAL Trends 500

The Trusted Source

2016 REAL Trends Market Leaders

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT Was Ranked #1 in Hartford/New Haven/ New London Counties.*

RANK	COMPANY	CLOSED SIDES
1	Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT	8,189
2	William Raveis Real Estate, Mortgage & Insurance	7,497
3	Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England Properties	6,874

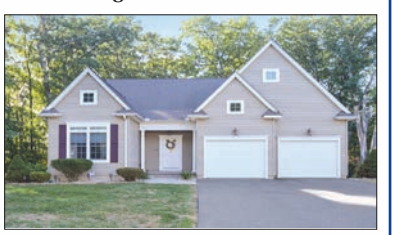
*According to the 2016 REAL Trends Market Leaders report for sides in 2015.

BLOOMFIELD – Fantastic location bordering Tumblebrook Golf Course. New stone tiered patio in back. Ease of living w/ First Floor Master & First Floor laundry. 2nd floor offers 2 additional bedrooms.$385,900

Greg Reese 860.818.4861

WEST HARTFORD – Spectacular huge split level in great neighborhood! 4 BR's, 2.5 baths with spacious master suite, open kitchen with island, hardwood floors and amazing family room & home office space. $374,900

Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560



WINDSOR – Practically new 4 BR, 3 bath Cape Cod on quiet cul-de-sac. 1st floor master suite, open kitchen w/island, great room w/gas fireplace, hardwood floors, huge deck. Great location w/easy access to I-91. $365,000

Michael Antisdale 860.803.6560

WEST HARTFORD – Lovely home in idyllic neighborhood walking distance to the Center and Blue Back. 4 bedrooms, 1.1 baths, front to back living room with gas fireplace, finished lower level. $359,000

Tracey Hollerbach 860.305.7993

WEST HARTFORD – This 4 bedroom home offers a flexible floor plan. Main floor has option for 1st floor bedroom or office space, the 2nd level offers 3 big bedrooms and 2 full baths. $329,900

Tracey Hollerbach 860.305.7993

WEST HARTFORD – Beautiful Classic Col in a great neighborhood setting. Updated EIK w/Granite. Charming Sun porch overlooks landscaped backyard. Four lg Bedrooms on the 2nd Floor. LL Family Room w/ Granite bar. $314,000

Billie Reese 860.841.2457

WEST HARTFORD – Well maintained 4 bedroom, 2.1 bath Cape Cod. Enormous master bedroom, finished basement, garage, deck & yard! Walk to blue back square & west Hartford center. $300,000

Joyce Aparicio 860.913.4231

WEST HARTFORD – Rarely available 2 bedroom, 2 full bath corner unit- fully updated. All new wood flrs, baseboards & doors. Fully remodeled kitchen w/ cherry cabinets, granite counters & SS appliances. $299,999

Chris Scigulinsky 860.906.7726

WEST HARTFORD – Terrific turn key split level home that has totally redone inside and out including roof, furnace and a/c. You'll love the spacious and open concept with gleaming floors & crown moldings throughout. $299,900

Kara Flanagan 860.796.5532

FARMINGTON – Location, location! Rarely available spacious Town house w/ 2 bedrooms and 2.1 Baths in the Old Mountain Village Complex. Kitchen with newer SS appliances and breakfast bar that open to dining room. $249,900

Mary Rose Sinatro 860.614.4566

WEST HARTFORD – Charming 3BR, 2 full BA Colonial. Hardwood floors throughout, freshly painted. Large living room with wood burning fireplace. Kitchen with breakfast bar. 1st floor laundry. $239,000

Chris Scigulinsky 860.906.7726

WEST HARTFORD – Classic Colonial in great neighborhood. Hardwood under carpeting in Living Room, Dining Room, stairs and bedrooms. Finished LL w/great berber carpet. EIK has been updated w/ beautiful maple cabinets. $239,000

Greg Reese 860.818.4861

WEST HARTFORD – Well kept 3 BR in Aiken school district. Newly refinished hardwood floors in fireplaced LR & DR. Newer roof, windows & electrical. Large 20x20 deck overlooking West Hartford. spacious back yard. $234,900

Mary Rose Sinatro 860.614.4566

Sylvie Fillion, Mortgage Representative & Senior Loan Officer For Special Financing Opportuinties On Any Of Our Listings, Please Contact Sylvie at 860-570-2520 • NMLS #110720 & CT #5584

Please stop by our new office to view our West Hartford Property Showcase!

West Hartford Office | 992 Farmington Avenue | West Hartford, CT 06107 | 860.231.2600

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